

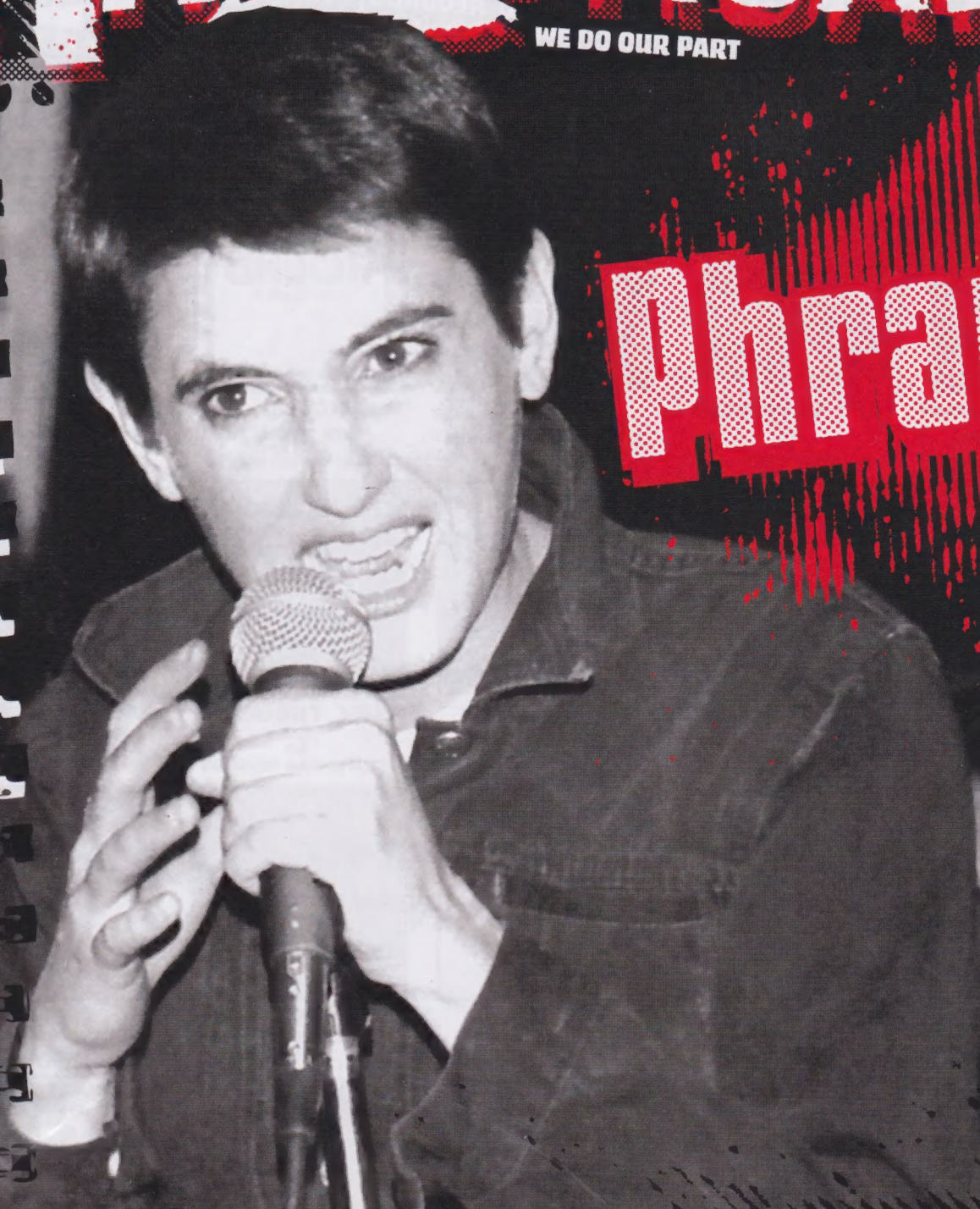
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#101

Phranc



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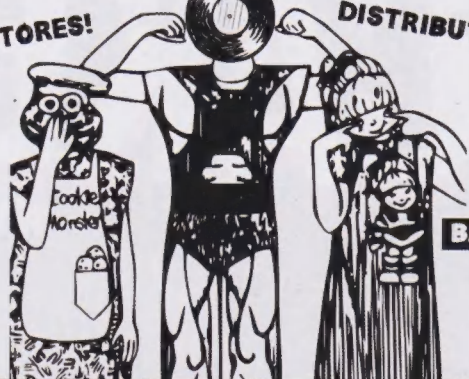
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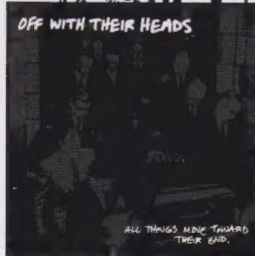
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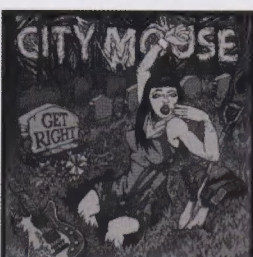
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To the rest of the world, this may look like nothing; but we know.

—Todd Taylor

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FISH SHOWING OFF HER COOL,
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ONE SIZE FITS ALL.



"All Payment Ain't in the Coin."

I just don't like capitalism.

Sean Carswell planted this seed for me a couple months back: imagine a world without capitalism. How would you act? We have no problem as a society vividly imagining the worst in people. There's no shortage of plotlines for what happens when the world ends. Zombie outbreaks and alien invasions. Total climate collapse. Pandemics. Post-apocalyptic dystopias are rampant. Yet, even as the world implodes, it's almost a given that the most resistant strains of capitalism—which are assumed to be deeply seeded into humans' DNA—will remain. More people are engaged with a hypothetical zombie takeover than how to live in another economic and political system besides capitalism. It's a creative limitation that assumes competition will reign supreme over cooperation, and material-enriching violence will destroy "naïve" and "silly" long-term solutions for a just society. I want to call that out as myth.

I understand I live in a deeply capitalist society. I pay bills for Razorcake to have even the meagerest form of stability. But we persist. As Mike Watt says in part II of his interview, "all payment ain't in the coin." I won't accept the idea the zine you're holding is merely "product." It's a portable warehouse of hundreds of peoples' thoughts and expressions. Yes, we sell it, not to "reinforce our brand," but to make enough money to make the next one and the one after. Razorcake is purposely marginalized from capitalism, staffed with outcasts from the broader group—due to class, gender, ethnicity, and ideology—not as a marketing campaign, but as a mode of survival and a collection of rebellious voices. Intentionally, from the very beginning, we donate Razorcake to community spaces, local libraries, and record and book stores because that's who we want to coexist with in the world: the physical spaces where human interactions happen.

I blatantly ripped off our buddy Kevin Dunn's terminology for what we are: intentionally bad capitalists. I'm not entirely comfortable

with labels because these atomized and polarized times strip nuance and shorten conversations. So "communist" and "socialist" don't work for me. Community and shared responsibility do. Invest your time and skill. Offer to fix a bike in exchange for fruit falling off a tree. Make the smallest of daily gestures to remind ourselves that every interaction in life doesn't have to be part of a vicious larger framework, woefully lopsided in favor of the rich.

Imagine if wages were replaced by another form of, not currency, but mutual social support. There would be no ever-widening disparity between boss and laborer. No glass ceiling for women. No racist divides in technology. Janitors and field workers would be treated with the same respect as doctors and lawyers.

Imagine a world that encourages women to learn science and math and then celebrates and remembers their achievements.

Imagine if the person making a garment from bolts of cloth was more important than the advertising and branding money going into that piece of clothing. Imagine if money wasn't a corporation's Supreme Court-backed "voice." Imagine a world without compound interest, overdraft fees, arbitrary economic borders, credit default swaps, adjustable rate mortgages, and rampant rent increases.

Imagine a cool-looking rock you found on the ground being as desirable as diamonds and gold. Then imagine all the people who wouldn't be suffering from mercury poisoning from "artisanal" gold mining.

Imagine if abusive cultural institutions, the gateways to popular culture such as Vice Media, Fox News, The Academy of Motion Pictures, and The Recording Academy—weren't primarily predicated on heaping mounds of predatory money.

Just keep imagining and working. Making things with my own hands instead of constant consumption pulls back the veil of new possibilities every day. No matter how small. No matter how insignificant.

—Todd Taylor

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"Time was a war
time economy was
a silver lining to
tragedy / but even
those with homes
are now those
alone."

—Dillinger Four
"Minimum Wage Is
a Gateway Drug"

THANK YOU: Rip a page out of largely overlooked, criminally underrated history, Phranc/Nervous Gender thanks to Jesse Zeroxed and Louis Jacinto for the cover layout and photo; I will publically take back "Shepard Fairey can suck it" if he donates \$5,000 every year to Razorcake (tax-deductible) thanks to Bone Dust for Donna's illo.; Gussin-brand blood capsules thanks to Bill Pinkel for Jim's illo.; Well, the harmonica couldn't be hiding in the zebra thanks to Angela Austin for Nerb's pic; Crooked cigs, post-piñata thanks to Simon Sotelo for Bianca's illo.; Nopalotes en la frente thanks to Vanessa Salazar for the Puro Pinche Poetry collage; Full sign says "No Underwear" wedding thanks to Kasia Oniszczuk for the Chicken photo; Glow-in-the-dark paint doesn't work in the daytime thanks to Steve Thueson for Dale's illo.; Homoeroticism and free-flowing blood from a coconut thanks to James Rosario and Art Fuentes for the One Punk's Guide to Professional Wrestling article and illos.; Arm cannon aimed squarely at all the negative bullshit in the world thanks to Sean Arenas, Shelby Fujioka, Mick Jacobs, and Dylan Davis for the Sammus interview, photos, and layout; Crushes on girls and parakeets since kindergarten thanks to Alice Bag, Louis Jacinto, Michael Ochoa, Gerardo Velazquez, and Jesse Zeroxed for the Phranc interview, photos, and layout; Contemplate the watery abyss thanks to Mike Faloon, El Diablo, Robert Ibarra, Craig Ibarra, Dan Monick, and Eric Baskauskas for the Mike Watt interview, photos, and layout

"I was legit sad when I flipped the record and it was a blank side, but the "Posers fuck off" label was worth the laugh." —Candace Hansen, *Dark/Light, Tigers EP*. Thanks to 101's rotation of zines, books, and music reviewers: Jon Mule, Matt Average, MP Johnson, Nicole X, Simone Carter, Kayla Greet, Candace Hansen, Art Ettinger, Mark Twistworthy, Jackie Rustad, Sal Lucci, Keith Rosson, Sean Arenas, Indiana Laub, Chris Terry, Rich Cocksedge, Ian Wise, Kurt Morris, Matt Werts, Nerb, Garrett Barnwell, Mike Frame, Jimmy Alvarado, Sal Go, Sean Koeppenick, Camille Reynolds, Theresa W., Ty Stranglehold, Matt Seward, Juan Espinosa, Michael T. Fournier, Bryan Static, Billups Allen, The Lord Kveldulfr, Chad Williams, Lyle, Cynthia Pinedo, Tim Brooks, Paul J. Comeau, Craven Rock, Jim Woster, Adrian Salas, Jim Joyce, and Tricia Ramos.

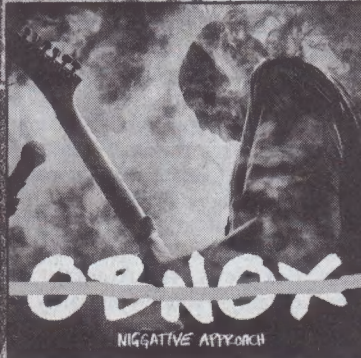
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Chris Terry's
kid digesting
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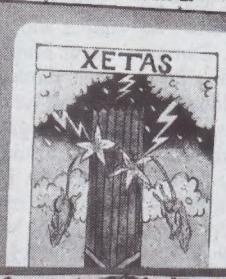
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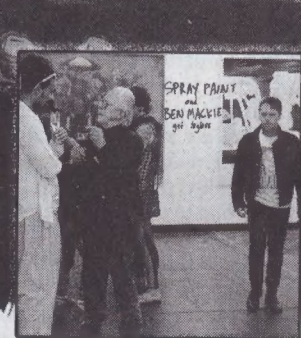
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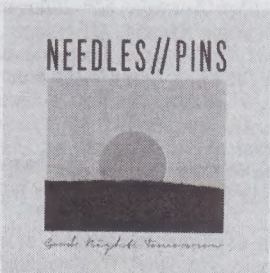
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The following folks stepped forward to help us do our part over the past two months. Without their help, Razorcake wouldn't be what it is.

Todd Taylor, Daryl Gussin, Kari Hamanaka, Rishbha Bhagi, Ever Velasquez, Nicole Macias, Matthew Hart, Donna Ramone, Derek "à la" Whipple, Chris Baxter, Steve Couch, Megan Pants, Marcos Siref, Candice Tobin, Griffin Wynne, Seth Swaaley, Sean Carswell, Skinny Dan, Katy Spining, Jimmy Alvarado, Yvonne Drazan, Dale Drazan, Josh Rosa, Robert El Diablo, Mark McBride, Alice Bag, Marty Ploy, Rachel Murray Framingheddu, Rene Navarro, Billy Kostka III, Samantha McBride, Jason Willis, Janeth Galaviz, Matt Average, Joe Dana, Juan Espinosa, Meztlí Hernandez, Sean Arenas, Adrian Salas, Adrian Chi, Aaron Kovacs, Julia Smut, Jenn Witte, Dave Eck, Tim Burkert, Jeff Proctor, Nighthawk, Toby Tober, Sal Lucci, Jennifer Federico, Kevin Dunn, Maggie Egan, Jennifer Whiteford, Kayla Greet, Steve Thueson, Cassie J. Snider, Bill Pinkel, Kurt Morris, Laura Collins, Eric Baskauskas, Bianca, Rhea Topp, Russ Van Cleave, John Di Marco, Michael T. Fournier, Simon Sotelo, Susan de Place, Timothee de Place, Bryan Static, John Miskelly, Genesis Bautista, Andy Garcia, Camille Reynolds, Becky Bennett, Craven Rock, Replay Dave, Adam Ali, Chris Devlin, MP Johnson, Tim Brooks, Patrick Houdek, Louis Jacinto, Chris Boarts Larson, J.V. McDonough, Isaac Thotz, Kat Jetson, Noah Wolf, Jon Mule, Chris Terry, Jackie Rusted, Rosie Gonce, Rick V., Scotty McMaster, Rayne Blakeman, James Kittlekamp, Jeff Khan, Punky Bowen, Sam Grinberg, Melanie Matrangola, Elly Dallas, Ricky Vigil, Ollie Mikse, Art Fuentes, Mitch Clem, Dylan Davis, Becky Rodriguez, Gabby Gonzalez, Keith Rosson, Megan Razzetti, Paul Silver, Matt Werts, Stacy Medina, David Enslinger, Danny Rust, Clara Acosta, Jamie L. Rotante, Daisy Noemi, George Lopez, Christine Arguello, Ronnie Sullivan, Cheryl Klein, Eden Kittiver, Shelby Fujioka, Jesse Zoroxed, Alice Elmer, Cheyenne Neckmonster, Dustin Antonopoulos, Alicia Armijo, Garrett Barnwell, Sal Go, Nørh, Chris Mason, Tim Jamison, Codey Richards, Amina Cruz, Kiyoshi Nakazawa, Alexis Ratkevich, Nicole X, Shane Milner, Michelle Kirk, Jill Ware, Armando Perez, and James Rosario.

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This issue is dedicated to the memories of Grant Hart, Victoria Scalisi, and Fats Domino

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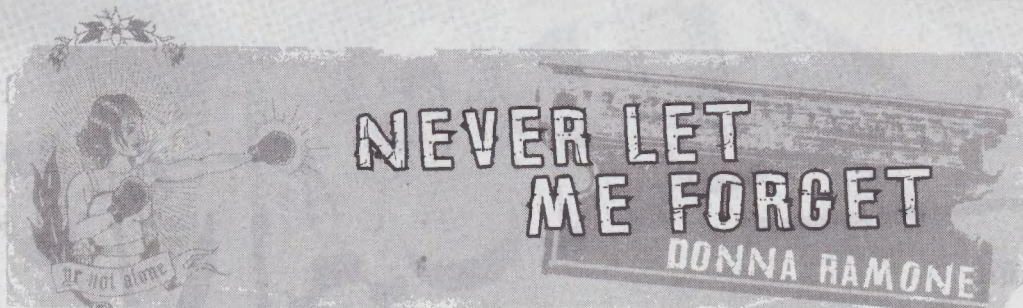
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This issue of *Razorcake* is made possible in part by grants from the City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs, is supported by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles Arts Commission, and has activities funded by the California Arts Council, a state agency.



My cousins and I are all best friends. Distance and culture clash never hindered our friendship.

The Family Ban

The Muslim Ban was renewed right as I was writing this. I saw the headline “Three New Countries Added” and panicked. I quickly scanned news articles for the word “Bahrain” and instead found the words “Chad, North Korea, and Venezuela.” I can already hear the conservative talking heads now: “It’s not a Muslim ban, libtard. North Korea is on the list!” America hates more than just Muslims, so quit your whining.

My aunt and I are close. She sends me ridiculous WhatsApp Messenger forwards nearly every day. Wanting to visit me, she had to go to the American Embassy to obtain a visa to travel here. In the past, my family has never run into issues coming to see me. They give them my name and address, say it’s for a vacation, and the embassy awards them a ten-year visa. Sometime after 2001, there’s more to the application than writing down my address and signing their name. There is now an interview that has to be conducted. It’s not an interview, really. It’s an interrogation.

My first inkling there had been a change was when my cousin and her husband wanted to go to Disneyland with me. My cousins and I are all best friends. Distance and culture clash never hindered our friendship. My cousin Aisha and her brother visited me in 2004. Then she married her husband in 2009, and they wanted to visit me together. Her earlier travel visa was still good, but he had to go in for an interview. They asked her husband a lot of questions about my family and me, things he didn’t know because it was his wife who knew me intimately enough to answer the personal questions they ask. He never told me what they said exactly, but after several weeks they denied his visa. They don’t tell you why your visa might be denied, but we have the suspicion he shared a name with someone labeled a terrorist. Never mind that his name is so generic it is also shared by thousands of others besides him. My cousins still haven’t visited me. I can’t blame them.

Last month my aunt went in for her interview and they were unrelenting. She just wanted to visit her niece (me) and her sister (my mom). They demanded to know why my mom had immigrated to the United States. My aunt shrugged, “She moved because of her husband.”

“And who is her husband?”

“He’s from Bahrain, too.”

“Then why did he immigrate to the United States?”

“For work, I want to say?”

“That’s not good enough.”

My dad immigrated to America in 1973, following his older brother who had come in 1972. Both were looking for opportunity, adventure, and a place far away from their dominant father. He later went back to Bahrain, met, and married my mom. They moved back and forth between America and Bahrain together when he couldn’t find a decent job after Bahrain gained independence from British rule in 1971 (he had gone to the technical British college, which didn’t look great anymore).

My aunt probably doesn’t know any of this. She and my dad aren’t really friends. Because she doesn’t have detailed knowledge about all the reasons why he chose to immigrate to the U.S. nearly forty-five years ago, Homeland Security considered barring her from visiting my mom and me.

We had our first, personal panic as a family when this happened. The embassy informed my aunt my father would have to send them an email or letter detailing—something. We weren’t sure what they wanted, aside from a letter. The story of his immigration? His passport number and date he was awarded citizenship? How does he prove his nearly forty-five years of dedication to this discriminatory country any further?

Despite everything, he still lives here. He keeps a little American flag outside of his front door. He raised two American children. He and his brother even westernized their names (given, it was so they wouldn’t be racially profiled as much when the 1973 Oil Embargo occurred—the U.S. sided with Israel, so Arab countries collectively imposed an embargo, and Americans hated Arabs for keeping their Datsuns from getting gasoline).

In his panic, my dad wanted to go to a federal office and “clear up” anything that might now be on his record before the next time he heads to the airport. In my panic, I pleaded with him to do nothing and if anyone contacted him, to get a lawyer immediately. My mom panicked her family could never visit her in California again because of some Homeland Security asshole. I texted my brother and he started to panic because he didn’t understand what was happening, being far away and not

getting all the details from my texts. None of us knew what to do but panic.

I used the moment to get my parents to understand the gravity of a situation I was following much closer than they have been. “You have to understand this is the Trump Administration. This is the Muslim Ban. I know Bahrain isn’t on that list, but that doesn’t mean anything. If they want to, they will make traveling to Bahrain too difficult for all of us. America doesn’t like Muslims.”

“We have rights, we are Americans, Donna. Calm down,” my dad insisted.

“Then they’ll sign a piece of paper saying we don’t have them anymore. They already did. Several times. And people protested in airports the first time, but by the second and the third they just stopped. They’re tired. It went though, anyway. If we were from Iran, no one could fly to us. Don’t forget that.”

It was a newly inaugurated U.S. president who said, “there is nothing to fear, but fear itself”—and then went on to incarcerate Japanese-Americans in prison camps. He wasn’t speaking to anyone Japanese when he spoke of fear; he was only talking to white Americans dealing with financial collapse. Anyone of Japanese ancestry had much more to fear besides fear itself.

Japanese-Americans lost their homes and their possessions. Everything they had worked for. They lost their identity as Americans, even if they were born here and had never seen Japan. Nearly every Japanese-American in the country was forced to live (and in some cases, die) in those camps—for no reason other than their ancestry. There was no way for anyone to have known Pearl Harbor might occur. Yet, suddenly those violent actions lead to 120,000 innocent people being racially incarcerated in desolate camps.

The president who spoke of “fear itself” and imprisoned an entire nationality was so beloved he was elected to four terms.

I wonder if anyone Japanese voted for him, mistakenly believing he spoke to them as well when he said, “Americans.”

—Donna Ramone





BONE DUST

They don't tell you why your visa might be denied, but we have the suspicion he shared a name with someone labeled a terrorist.

Never mind that his name is so generic it is also shared by thousands of others besides him.



LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

Neon Maniacs
had an “electric,
almost punk
energy.”

Fangoria #47

A quick note: This is part of an ongoing series about the '80s horror movie Neon Maniacs, written by my late cousin, Mark Patrick Carducci, who took his own life in 1996.

I was searching for *Neon Maniacs* movie posters when I stumbled across an online merchant selling a copy of *Fangoria* #47. The issue featured *Neon Maniacs* and I had to have it.

I didn't know that *Fangoria* had covered my cousin's movie, much less splashed it on its cover. When I zoomed in on the image, there in the lower left-hand corner was a publicity photo of Slash, one of the maniacs from the movie. It says above the caption, “Killers from Another Dimension! NEON MANIACS.”

It was only eleven bucks so I ordered it.

To be clear, *Fangoria* wasn't a zine, but it acted like one.

First published in 1979, issue #1 features an image of Godzilla on the cover and had an eyebrow that read “Starlog presents.”

Starlog was a magazine devoted to all things Star Trek and then widened its scope to science fiction movies and television projects. It was published by The Brooklyn Company from 1976 to 2009.

Fangoria followed *Starlog*'s format of providing content for fans: interviews with writers and directors, behind-the-scenes photos, and news about movies in production. As its name suggests, *Fangoria* wasn't an industry publication. It was strictly for the fans.

What made *Fangoria* essential reading for horror fanatics was its access. *Fangoria* writers and photographers got on set and documented how the make-up artists and special effects crews were able to turn people into creatures. The magazine wasn't shy about splashing horrific images of severed heads, half-devoured corpses, and partially destroyed monsters on its covers and in its pages.

Ryan Bradford, editor of the literary horror anthology *Black Candies*, told me reading *Fangoria* “Felt so taboo.” The magazine was as blasé about blood and gore as punk zines are about drinking and drugs.

Fangoria was basically *Razorcake* for hardcore horror fans.

In 1985, *Fangoria* sent a photographer and a writer named Dennis Fischer to the

set of *Neon Maniacs*. They were shooting at Griffith Park in Los Angeles, which was standing in for Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.

Neon Maniacs had experienced a number of financial setbacks. There was such a long gap between the initial filming and final takes that all twelve of the actors who played the monsters in the movie were no longer available when filming resumed. They had to find new maniacs.

This caused enormous problems for the special effects team because the monster masks were made from molds of the original actors. That meant they had to alter the masks to fit the new actors without changing their appearance, which was easier said than done, particularly with a limited budget and an intense time crunch.

All hands were on deck for the maniacs' first major appearance in the film: a killing spree in the park. While the fog machines laid down a carpet of murk and the klieg lights cast spooky shadows in the trees, one person came clearly into focus: my cousin.

It's such a strange feeling to open the pages of *Fangoria* and see my cousin's name, Mark Patrick Carducci, splashed across five pages of copy.

The piece on *Neon Maniacs* is longer than the interview with Robert Englund, a.k.a. Freddy Krueger. Longer than the interview with sci-fi writer Fritz Leiber. Longer than stories about *Fright Night*, *Lifeforce*, or *The Explorers*. It's one of the longest stories in the magazine, which is strange considering *Neon Maniacs*' marginalized reputation.

Mark has a lot to say. It's almost as if my cousins sensed he needed to set the record straight; that his vision for the movie was not lining up with the chaos unfurling on the set.

The article begins with the question so many viewers of *Neon Maniacs* have asked, one that I have pondered innumerable times: What exactly are the maniacs?

“I thought, ‘What about a film that has creatures and monsters that have eyes as bright as yours, have intelligence behind them, who have facial expressions, who move quickly—and you couldn't get away from them?’ They're sort of extra-dimensional, supernatural beings that enter our plane of existence, at will.”

“They're new monsters,” Mark continued. “They're not the dead returned to life or something like that. When I wrote it,

I was really tired of stumbling zombies with dead eyes.”

At this point, George Romero's zombie franchise was preparing to release its third iteration. In fact, the interview with Tom Savini, special effects artist for *Day of the Dead*, is the cover story for *Fangoria* #47.

Later in the interview, Mark makes some telling pop culture comparisons, “*Neon Maniacs* is EC Comics meets *The Warriors* or *Road Warrior*.”

Entertaining Comics is an influential comic book publisher that ran a number of horror, humor, military and science fiction titles. Its most famous comic was the highly influential *Tales from the Crypt*. EC also published *Mad Magazine* and continues to do so to this day.

The Warriors, with its mix of urban violence and dystopian fantasy, seems to have had a strong influence on Mark. “I was inspired somewhat by *The Warriors*. *Neon Maniacs* is a supernatural gang film.”

This makes a great deal of sense to me. *The Warriors* isn't just a gang movie. It's a gang movie set in an alternate future populated with fictional gangs culled from pop culture. While the influence of martial arts movies, black exploitation films, British skinheads, and Stanley Kubrick's *Clockwork Orange* is apparent, *The Warriors* still feels boldly fresh and has inspired countless imitators.

Neon Maniacs aspires to be more than just a monster movie, one that pits an unlikely alliance of teenagers against an army of familiar-looking creatures that prove to be an entirely new kind of monster.

Even the trailer for *Neon Maniacs* owes a debt to *The Warriors*, for it introduces the maniacs “in diabolical order” (Axe, Slash, Doc, Decapitator, et cetera.) in much the same way *The Warriors*' trailer handled the plethora of oddly garbed gangs (The Gramercy Riffs, The Lizzies, The Baseball Furies, The Turnbull AC's, et cetera.).

But this comparison only goes so far. As much as I love *Neon Maniacs*, it falls well short of *The Warriors*. It's more comic book pastiche than cutting edge cinema. One online pundit calls *Neon Maniacs*' homicidal crew “a macabre version of the Village People” and, as much as it stings, I'm hard-pressed to disagree.

The highlight of the *Fangoria* piece is Mark's revelation the title *Neon Maniacs*



BILL PINKEL

It's tempting to read this interpretation of zombies vs. maniacs through the lens of mental illness.

comes from a line in a poem he wrote in high school about the Hell's Angels. He liked the line and thought it would make a great title for a movie, believed it had an "electric, almost punk energy."

He was right.

It's painful to think how *Neon Maniacs* must have let Mark down.

Mark wanted his creatures to be smart, expressive, and fast, but they were none of these things. While they have an uncanny ability to home in on their targets, the maniacs shuffle like zombies, even when they're chasing the meddling kids on the subway—another nod to *The Warriors*.

It's tempting to read this interpretation of zombies vs. maniacs through the lens of mental illness. On one hand you have maniacs who are alert, intelligent, intense; on the other hand are the zombies who are slow, mute, neither alive nor dead. Mark wanted his monsters to be manic but instead they are severely depressed.

I can sense his disappointment in the interview. While discussing the screenplay's long journey from page to screen, he reveals that he'd optioned the film to Steven Mackler for a period of one year. As the year wound down he approached a friend, Ken Wiederhorn, who read the script and told him there were some people to whom he wanted to show

it. Mark went back to Steven who, much to his surprise, handed him a check.

It felt like a dream come true, but four years passed before the financing came together. *Neon Maniacs* was eventually handed to veteran cinematographer Joe Mangine. It would be his first film.

During the two years it took to make the movie, much of the cast and crew departed. Mark is characterized as having described it as a nerve-wracking and frustrating experience. That would be an understatement.

There are writers in Hollywood who contend the only thing that matters is the paycheck. Mark wasn't one of those writers. He loved horror movies. He didn't just want to be a working writer. He wanted to contribute to the tradition those movies established and pay homage to it. From the point of view of the child protagonists, *Neon Maniacs* is about how loving horror movies can save your life. That was a deeply resonant message for Mark.

Six years had passed since Mark had been paid for his screenplay, but there he was on the set, eager to share his vision with a writer from a fanzine. They'd changed the heart of the story that reflected his own childhood, erased him from the script, but none of this diminished his enthusiasm, his spirit.

There is one characteristic that both *Neon Maniacs* and *The Warriors* share.

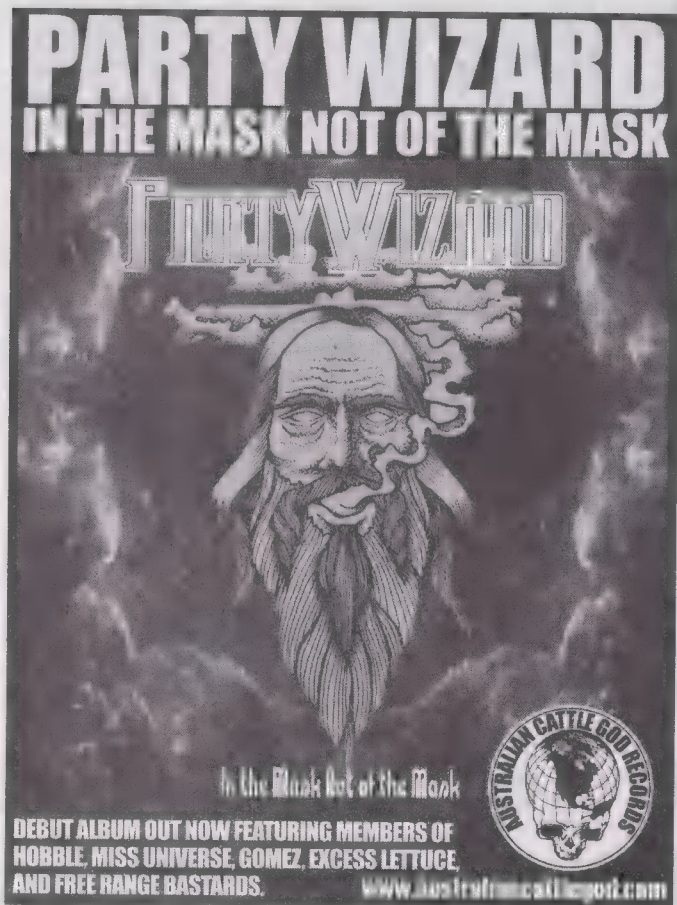
The gang members in *The Warriors* don't wink at their circumstances to let the viewer know they're in the joke. They never break character and acknowledge the absurdity of the situation. Quite the opposite, they treat the events with deadly seriousness. This smoldering tension is what makes *The Warriors* thrilling to watch even today. It's essentially a long chase sequence in which the gang members do much more running than fighting.

That was 1979, but by 1986 we had become much more jaded. Audiences expected their horror movies to not only blink, but to wink back at them, to provide both terror and comedy, gasps and laughs.

As corny as it gets in *Neon Maniacs*, and it gets pretty corny, the kids never break character. They are incapable of it. They have discovered that playing at being an adult doesn't work when no one believes what you say. The masks they have been wearing in school no longer fit and fall away. Without them, they are immensely vulnerable, as all children are, as we all are when the monsters start to close in, and there's nothing funny about that.

—Jim Ruland

Next: Plan 9 from Outer Space



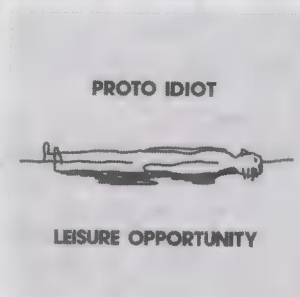
OUT NOW AND KNOCKIN' DICKS IN THE DIRT

GŪTARA KYŌ (JP)



self-titled 10"

PROTO IDIOT (UK)



leisure opportunity lp/cd

LES LULLIES (FR)



don't look twice ep
HAND & LEG (GR)

MONSIEURS (USA)



deux lp



WWW.SLOVENLY.COM



self-titled lp

WON'T YOU NOT NOW

ISN'T IT FUNNY HOW MEN
HAVE NIPPLES? LOL!

BRO!

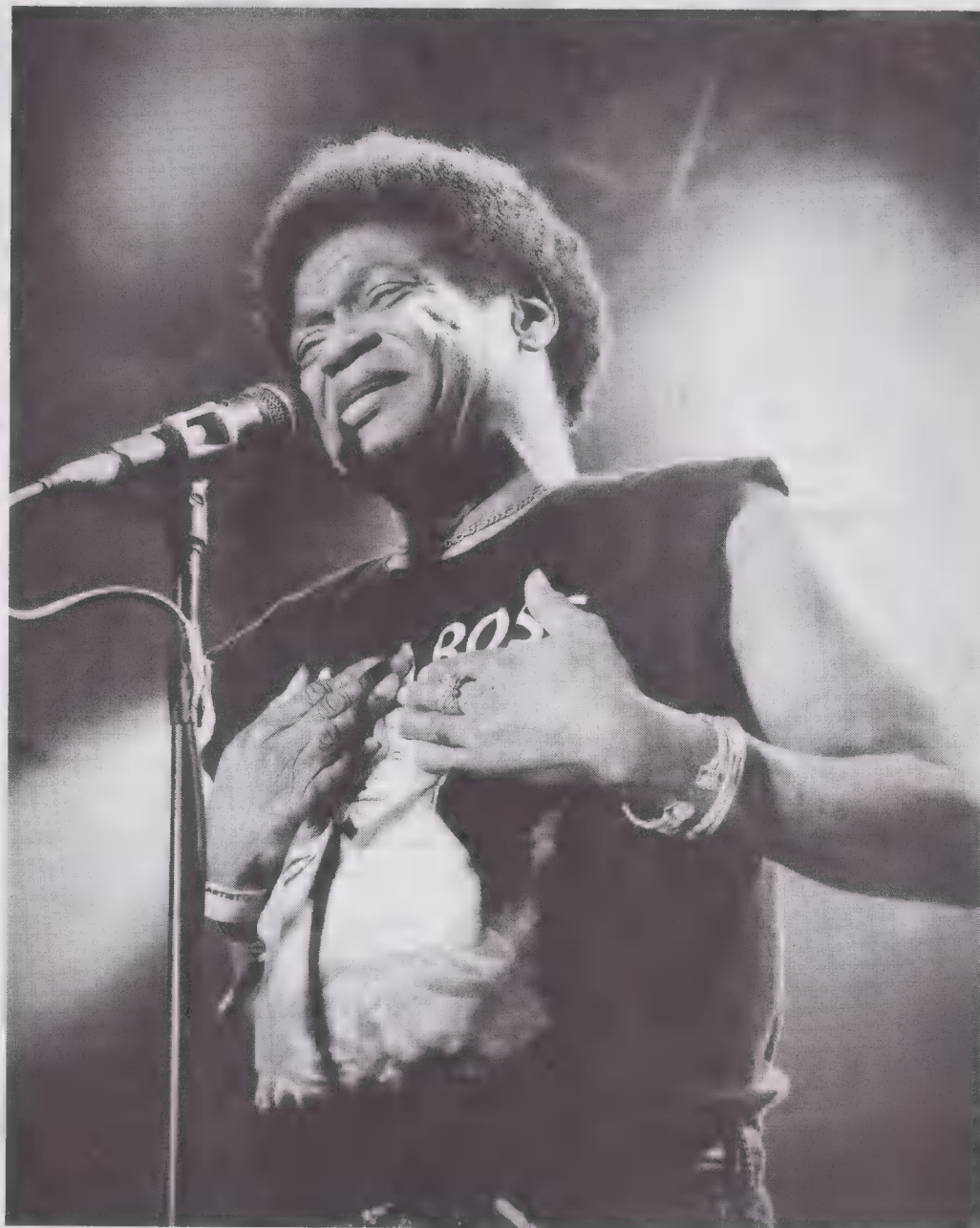
WHAT ARE THEY EVEN FOR?!
SCIENCE HAS NO EXPLANATION.

BRO,
RIGHT?!

WELL, WHAT ARE THEY FOR?

KN 3/17

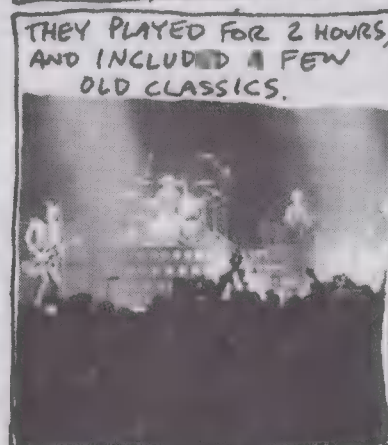
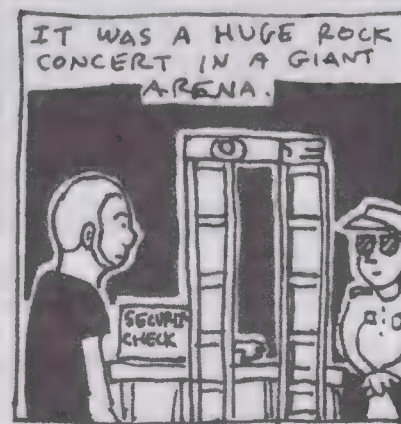
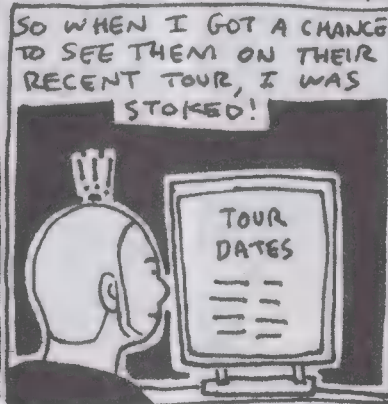
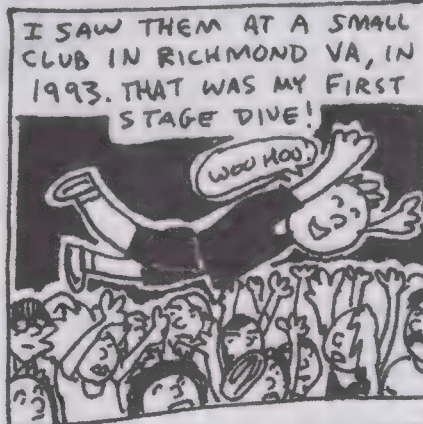
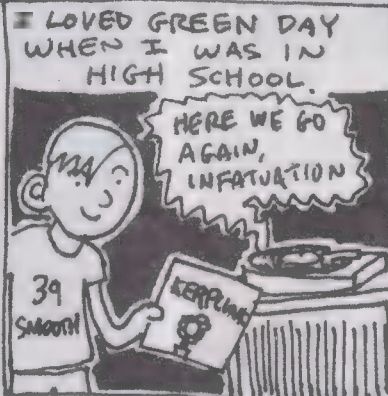
RAZORCAKE 11



Rachel Framingheddu's Photo Page

Charles Bradley, 11/5/48–9/23/17. The most grateful of hearts. The largest of souls. Rest in peace.

MY EIGHTY-FOURTH COLUMN FOR RAZORCAKE BY BEN SNAKEPIT



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KILLING THE TINY CAPITALIST
IN OUR HEADS
ONE PODCAST AT A TIME.

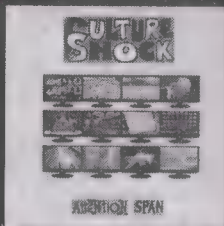
EVERY WEEK WE FIND THE BEST VOICES IN THE
UNDERGROUND BUILDING IT BRICK BY BRICK.
WE BREAK SHIT DOWN WITH THEM & TALK ABOUT HOW
WE CAN BUILD A WORLD WE'D HAVE A BLAST IN.

GET DOWN

DISPATCHESFROMTHEUNDERGROUND.COM



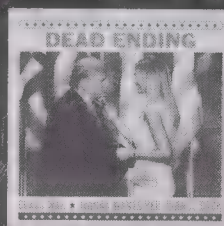
ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES



CULTURE SHOCK
Attention Span
Latest release in 25 years
Fronted by Dick Lucas



PANSY DIVISION
Quite Contrary
Disco Punk
Queercore



DEAD ENDING
Ivank
Disco Punk
No-frills hardcore



JELLO BIAFRA
& THE NEW ORLEANS
RAUNCH & SOUL ALL STARS
Wreck On Wheels Spinners



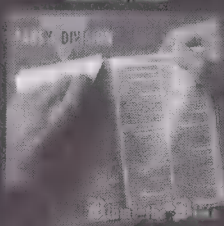
MISCHIEVOUS
This Is Not For Children
Punk Rock Folk
with teeth



DISASTER STRIKES
In The Age of Corporate
Personhood
Boston Punk
hardcore



FERAL OHMS
Fall / Sweethearts - 7
Disco Punk
Queercore



PANSY DIVISION
Utterly the Fiddle - 7
Off the new album
Quite Contrary



LEGENDARY SHACK SHAKERS
The Southern Surreal
Disco Punk
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ARNO CAMP
*The Greatest Band
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CHICO SIMIO

63

"SUNDAY KICKOFF"

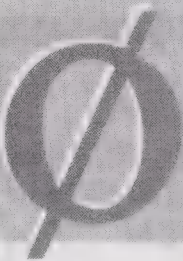
- ART.

WITH ALL THE MYRIAD IMPORTANT ISSUES AND PROBLEMS GOING ON IN THE WORLD, THE DUMPSTER FIRE-IN-CHIEF DECIDES TO FOCUS ON NFL ATHLETES PROTESTING DURING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM. I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED. SIGH...



MY FEELING IS, IF YOU WANT TO STAND FOR THE ANTHEM, AWESOME. IF YOU DON'T, ALSO AWESOME. PATRIOTISM AND LOVE OF COUNTRY SHOULD NOT HINGE ON STANDING FOR A SONG OR SALUTING A FLAG. IT'S SO MUCH MORE.

PATRIOTISM TO ME IS HELPING YOUR FELLOW HUMAN, NO MATTER WHERE THEY COME FROM. BEING KIND TO OTHERS AND TREATING EACH OTHER LIKE HUMAN BEINGS. PATRIOTISM DOESN'T COME FROM MILITARY MIGHT, IT COMES FROM LIVING IN A COUNTRY THAT DOES THE RIGHT THING FOR EVERYONE.



AMERICAN GRILLED CHEESE REVIEW

REV. NARB

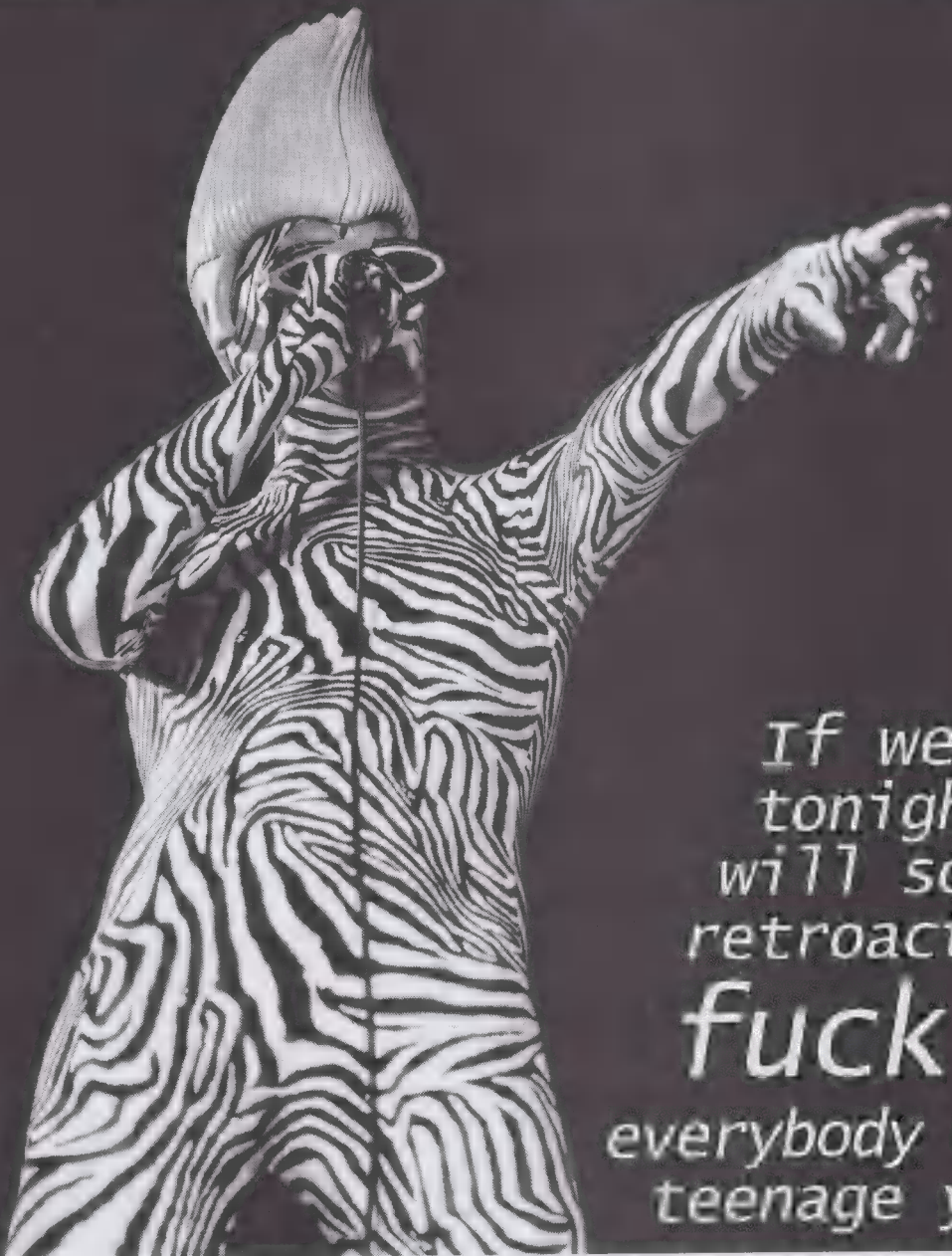
Your glop is
our pride!

SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG AGAIN

Inasmuch as punk rock can be said to be governed by certain irrefragible rules, then one of the most irrefragible must be something along these lines: Something will always go wrong leading up to the show, and the bigger the show, the wronger the something (some may claim this assertion is ■ mere punk-specific tributary of Murphy's Law—"anything that can go wrong, will go wrong"—but I speak for many when I state that we've all had ■ pretty nice time not thinking of Murphy's Law whatsoever for the last fifteen or twenty years, so don't fuck it up). I call this The Grand Mishap Theorem. If your band is playing to the usual suspects down at the corner bar on Friday night at ■ show of such low consequence in the Grand Hierarchy of Life Events that, come Saturday morning, the world will remain virtually unperturbed by your efforts and much like you hadn't played ■ all, The Grand Mishap will be nothing more severe than, say, leaving your cough drops in the car. If, however, the show is A MASSIVE EVENT OF LIFE-CHANGING, EPOCH-MAKING IMPORT, the degree of severity with which The Grand Mishap presents itself will, I can state in absolute certitude, ratchet itself up accordingly. I figured this out when I was fifteen. My band (a trio of dashing young lads then known as the Rat Eaters, later to morph into Suburban Mutilation, stars of stage and screen) (well, stage) (well, floor, mostly, if you wanna get technical) was fixing to play our first-ever gig, ■ cushy bill in our high school auditorium with three other bands from our school (think the Chi-Mos from *King Dork*). When you're fifteen and have never played a show before, the thought of the act of *actually playing somewhere*—somewhere that isn't some other kid's basement—is so far-fetched and transformative ■ concept that you really cannot wrap your head around the dread enormity of it all, simply because the event seems so BIG and WEIGHTY and LIFE CHANGING and FRAUGHT WITH IMPORT that you can't even imagine what manner of heavy personal transformations you'll have undergone once the event has taken place. It's kinda like losing one's virginity in that regard. Actually, it's superior: There are more girls around, and the lighting is better. *And it lasts longer! Even if your set is short!* You'll be two days out from The Big Event, and pacing your bedroom floor, thinking *I can't believe that forty-eight hours from now I will be admitted into the secret*

society of Those Who Have Played A Show! Like Jimmy Page! Like Jean-Jacques Burnel! Like Screaming Mad George! So you're pacing around, and pacing around, and worrying about how you're going to remember all four notes in "Blitzkrieg Bop," and another four notes in "I Just Wanna Have Something to Do," which is, shit, eight notes, wow, that's a lot of notes, but then again, one of those notes is shared between the two songs, so only seven notes, whew, bullet dodged, and gosh, two days from now I'll be walking down the street and housewives will cluster and point at me and converse in hushed whispers—"I heard HE played ■ *SHOW! In front of PEOPLE and everything!*"—and I will be loved and respected and admired and feared and by golly, it's just too good to be true! That is the exact point in time when your guitar player will call you up and tell you he quit. *Ding! Voici le Grand Mishap!* In my case, our drummer, Perry, had run into some seniors, who told him, as seniors will, that punk sucked, and our band sucked (speculative at this point, though true), and we sucked for being in a band that sucked and played sucky music, and, as our penalty for incurring all this suckage, they were all gonna be taking cartons of eggs to the gig for purposes of egging the fuck out of us, to show us the error of our ways. In response, Perry told him that, as we were a punk band by trade, not only were we coolly indifferent to the threat of a vociferous egging, but, in point of fact, we welcomed their lobblings as a badge of honor. Chuck all the prolapse spheroids you want! We revel in your disdain! Your glop is our pride! *Death is our bread! Danger is our butter!* Perry told the seniors to bring all the fucking eggs they wanted, we didn't give a shit. So that, of course, presented enough of a challenge to the egg-hurling masculinity of the Green Bay East senior class of 1981 that they vowed to increase the volume of the projectile bombardment exponentially, in order to properly crush our spirit. News of this merry undertaking got around school, and, when it got back to our guitar player, he flipped out on Perry because he was borrowing his cousin's guitar amp for the night, and he didn't want to get his cousin's amp all full of eggs, and what the fuck was Perry doing telling the seniors to throw more eggs at us, and various epistles of the aforementioned tenor. So, here I sit, forty-eight hours before admission to the Screaming Mad George Club, trying to smooth things

out between these two weirdos when I should be practicing my many notes. *Welcome to the Grand Mishap Club, kid! We hope you brought paper towels!* To present a rather summarized version of the denouement, I had talked everybody out of quitting by the next day, a few eggs sailed our way but nothing to flip out about, and I was granted entrance into the Freddy Garrity Club without further incident. Fast forward thirty-six years. It is now 2017, and my '90s pop punk band, Boris The Sprinkler, is playing a reunion show for my friend Time Bomb Tom's fiftieth birthday. We are playing ninth out of eleven bands, just before the Humpers (hah?) and the New Bomb Turks (wha?). We haven't played ■ show in eight years (only previous reunion show: Insubordination Fest in Baltimore, 2009), we haven't been an actual band in fourteen years, and this particular lineup hasn't played Green Bay in *eighteen years*. Eighteen years is a long fucking time. Children we conceived after a mad night of post-show frolic in 1999 would now be eligible to vote (WHAT WENT WRONG WITH AMERICA: Boris didn't conceive enough now-eligible voters in the 1990s. *Curse you, birth control!*). The Grand Mishap can get a pretty good head of steam behind it in eighteen years. A lot can go awry here. A lot. The four of us have only had one day of practice since 1999, and our only practice this go-round is gonna be the night before the show. That's two practices in *eighteen years*. We used to practice twice a *week!* The night before the show, we practice (for the second time this millennium) in my neighbor's garage, running through the set twice. The Mishap has not manifested. Yet. The Big Day comes. Our set is eight bands away. *Will everybody show up?* Seven bands away. *What if someone gets in ■ car crash on the way to the gig?* Six bands. *What if someone's mom dies?* Five bands. *What if the power goes out?* Four bands. *What if I shatter my ankle in the middle of the first song, and roll around the stage howling in pain like a sad old fuck until the EMTs cart me off?* Three bands. *What if I lose my voice?* Two bands. *What if we just suck?* One band left. I retire to my dressing cubicle (i.e., the stall in the men's room) and dress for success. My attire for the evening consists of nothing but a full-body zebra stripe leotard (learning from my near-asphyxiation at the first reunion show, I have craftily snipped mouth, nose, and eye holes), rubber new wave sunglasses, and ■ gigantic fluorescent green foam rubber



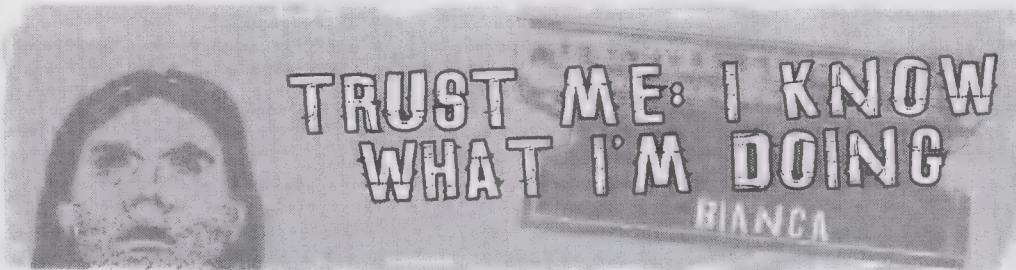
If we suck
tonight, it
will somehow
retroactively
fuck up
everybody here's
teenage years.

hairpiece that I got at a pawn shop (I, too, have contemplated exactly what manner of being would take a gigantic fluorescent green foam rubber hairpiece in to a pawn shop in the first place. Best guess: Balding Martian junkies). I exit my posh accommodations, and the Boris *Mega Anal* lineup takes our hometown stage for the first time in eighteen years, and the crowd—composed largely of thirty-somethings, many of whom adored us eighteen years ago when they were teenage somethings—explodes. They *really* want us to be good. Unlike Baltimore, which was remote enough where, if we sucked, we could just kinda stand there with our palms up and shrug—“eh, we tried!”—if we suck tonight, it will somehow retroactively fuck up everybody here's teenage years, because it will lead them to think that maybe their fond memories of their punk rock teenhoods were unduly colored by the hormone-addled jizz

of adolescence, and maybe things weren't so cool back then after all and the whole bit was merely another ongoing chapter in the disposable folly of youth, etc., so, needless to say, it is of paramount importance that we DO NOT SUCK tonight, because the psyches of a generation teeter tentatively on our ability to, you know, ROCK. So, hey, no pressure! Let's have fun out there! The band commenced rockin', somehow. I commenced hoppin'. Almost immediately, it felt like I had been pegged in the head, like something had hit my wondrous green Martian junkie hair. I spun around to see if I was perhaps bonking into an overhead drum mic, but I was in the clear. I jiggled this way and that, and felt it again—an unexplained ding to the head. Was our drummer whapping me upside the head? Seems kinda early in the set for such hijinx. Are people throwing quarters at me? ARE THOSE GODDAMN SENIORS

HERE??? Every time I moved, I felt it. *What the fuck could possibly keep hitting my head???* Then, midway through “*Drugs & Masturbation*,” it occurred to me: *Where is my harmonica?* You know, the one I use for “*Gimme Gimme Grape Juice?*” Where did I put it? I don't see it on stage... the last time I saw it, I was carrying it to the bathroom in my... hair. I was carrying my harmonica in my big green Martian hair. The hair that is now on my head. I have been playing this set with a fucking *harmonica* bouncing off my skull under my Martian junkie hair. BEHOLD: THE GRAND MISHAP!! The remainder of the set proceeded without incident, and a generation gave thanks to the Department of Mishaps for the unusually whimsical sentence. The end.

Love,
—Norb



**They get together
and make
burritos with
friends...**

A Special Thing

When I first moved to Los Angeles proper, I was working part-time at a teaching job and living in an apartment with my best friend. I had no money after my bills were paid, so I decided that I was going to continue my tradition of not owning a car. Instead, I loaded up my Metro card and got a bike. The trains stopped running at 11:30 back then, so I took my bike with me on the train or bus most of the times I went out after dark.

One night, I was going into downtown with my bike on the train and two young people about my age got on with their bikes.

I forget how, exactly, but our shared bike ownership kicked off a conversation between the three of us—maybe the girl complimented my bike or the guy asked me where I'd been riding. Whatever it was that got us talking in the first place, the end result was they invited me to meet up with them the following week at their friend's house to make some burritos. It was a weekly thing they did, the guy said—they get together and make burritos with friends, then they load up the food and some bottles of water and they ride together through downtown to hand the food out to people living on the streets and sidewalks.

At the time, I was going through a rough patch. I was trying to leave my job but no one else wanted to hire me. I was broke all the time and none of my other friends were. I knew at the time I was being a whiny baby about this incredibly commonplace situation, but I just couldn't get past it. This new opportunity seemed like a good chance to get a little perspective.

The next week, I was off to a house in Westlake, just west of downtown. I rode to the place with the pair I'd met on the train. Even if I'd gone alone, I could have easily picked the house out from the others on the block: There were about fifty bikes locked to the front fence and railing.

The house was really an apartment, and it took up the first floor of an old Craftsman-looking house. There were people everywhere in the space—playing music, drinking beer, talking about bikes—but the real action was happening in the kitchen.

Tortillas were being heated up on the stove. Once warm, the tortillas moved down an assembly line, getting filled with rice, beans, and salsa, ultimately getting rolled up and dropped into coolers so they'd stay warm.

After the cooler was filled to the top, it was time to go. Everyone filled up a backpack or bag with burritos and we split into groups to ride different routes through downtown. Each ride had a leader who knew the path. None of us were supposed to break off from the group alone. And every ride ended at the comfortably divey Bar 107, where the bartenders were cool and our first beer was always nicely discounted.

That first day was better than anything I could have imagined. I found an old email I wrote a friend, excitedly telling her how welcome everyone had made me feel. At the time, I was not the kind of person who easily inserted herself into situations where there were lots of new people, but there was something about this place that made me feel very comfortable there. I kept coming back, week after week.

When the two people who'd introduced me to the group stopped coming, I'd go alone, mostly just working on the burrito assembly line and listening to the conversations of everyone else in the kitchen. They all seemed like such good friends, and I was kind of intimidated by that at first. Regardless of my quiet weirdness, everyone was always so reliably nice to me. They asked me how my day was, made conversation, and shot the shit with me at the bar afterward.

Participating in this group did what I thought it would—give me a chance to think about someone else besides myself—but it was more than that. There was the ritual of having a place to go every week, and there was the fact that I felt like I was actually helping—helping the people who made the food, helping the people who ate the food. Having something in common with this big group of people made the city feel smaller and kinder. There wasn't anything wrong with me, but doing this every week still made me feel better.

I'd always felt safer being alone at night on my bike than on foot, but participating in this group really cemented

that feeling for me. I started to ride my bike more often. I oriented myself pretty well in the city because of it. Being a part of the group made me feel more secure on my bike and just more secure in the world in general.

My memory's not great, but I think I was involved in the group for at least two years, maybe three. I also forget exactly how or why my attendance dropped off, but not long after I stopped going, I heard the organizers were calling it quits. They were planning the last ride, and there was going to be a big blowout at Bar 107 to send everyone off in style.

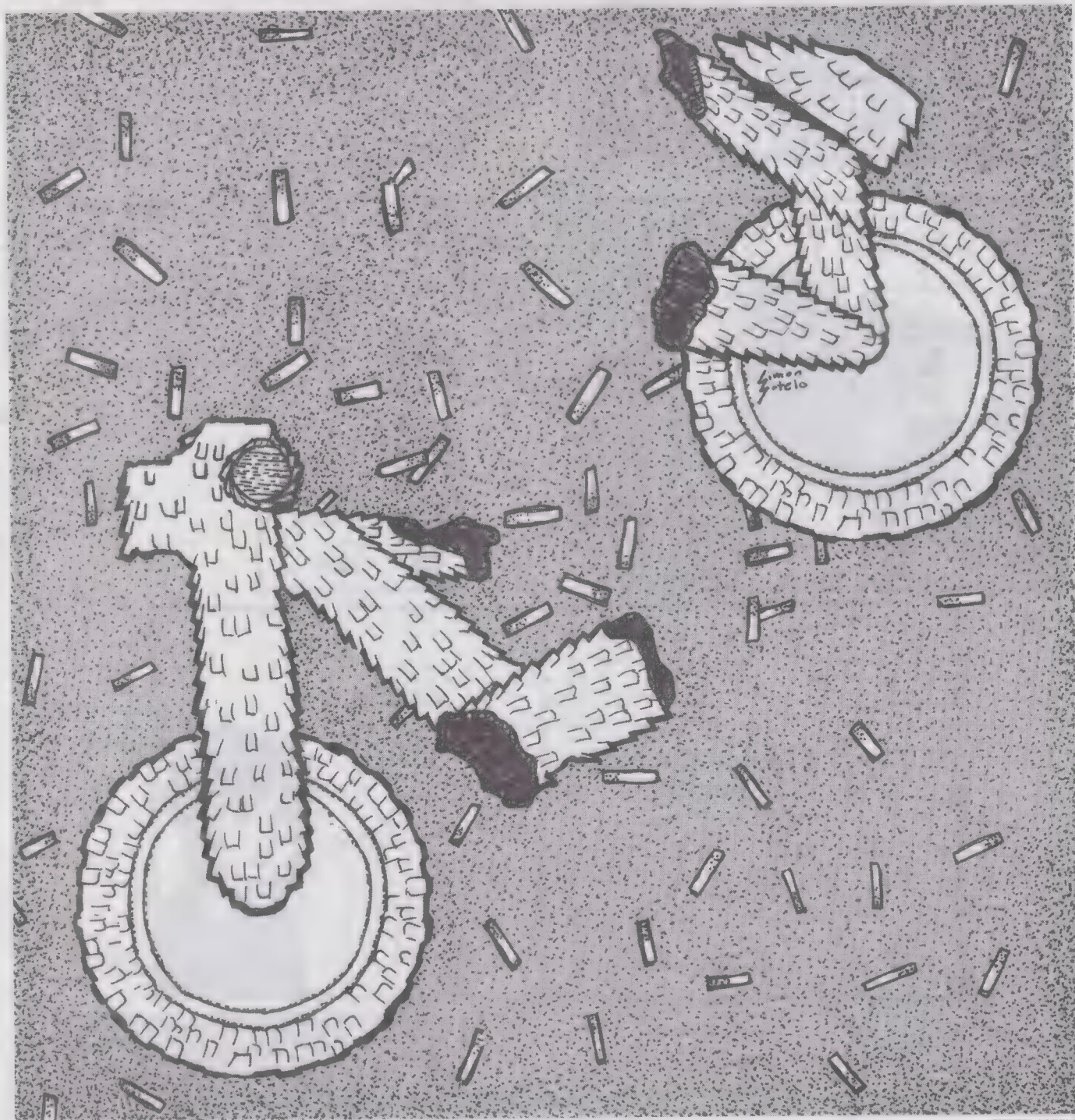
I didn't go to the party. I don't remember why I didn't go, but I'm fairly sure it wasn't a good reason. The event was in a pre-Instagram era, so I can't even indulge in the simple pleasure of going way back in the geotags for the bar and finding pictures from the party to look at so I can get a general idea of all the fun I missed.

When Bar 107 was forced to close two years ago, I felt like a lot of really happy, unremarkable memories from the burrito era of my life were going away, too—having my very first Olympia beer; feeling like a regular at a bar; sitting on the curb in front of the bar smoking bent cigarettes that had fallen out of a piñata at one of the group's anniversary parties. (I'm not a smoker, so that crooked cig was extra memorable and hilarious.)

There are a lot of other groups that make food communally and distribute it communally on a small scale, just like this group did. I heard of a couple that worked with my schedule. I tried going to one. The people were really friendly, and it was a ten-minute bike ride away from my house, but I just didn't get into it like I had before. (That ride ended up discontinuing shortly after my first time out with them.)

When that last attempt didn't pan out, I realized what was special about the initial group wasn't going to be replicated again. It was a special thing that fell into my lap. I enjoyed it while it was there, and then it was gone. I was really lucky to have it.

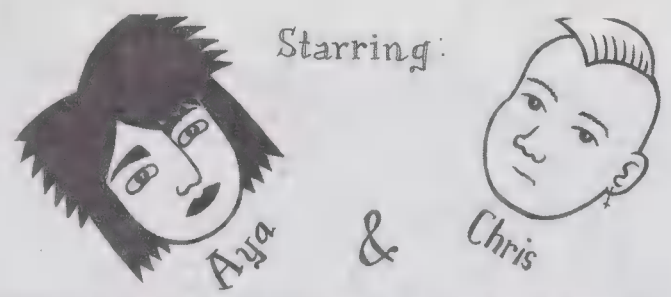
—Bianca



SIMON SOTELO

...and they ride together through downtown
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ASIAN GOTH PUNKS RULE *the* WORLD!



Starring:

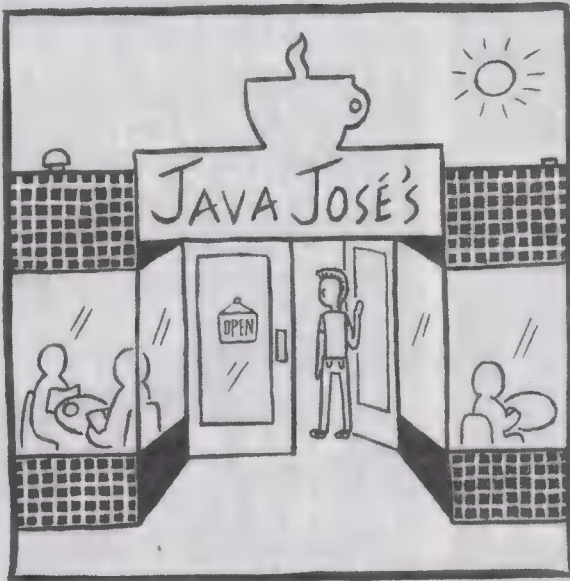
Aya

&

Chris

BY MARINAOMI





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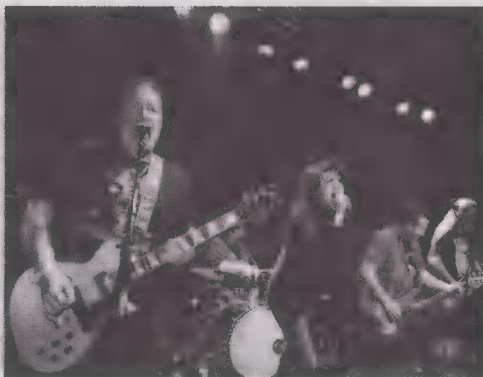
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Dan Monick's Photo Page
Zoe Zag, Los Angeles 8/05/17



PURO PINCHE POETRY GRITOS DEL BARRIO

EDITED BY EVER VELASQUEZ AND NICOLE MACIAS

**Borders only
exist because
we create them**

Respuesta

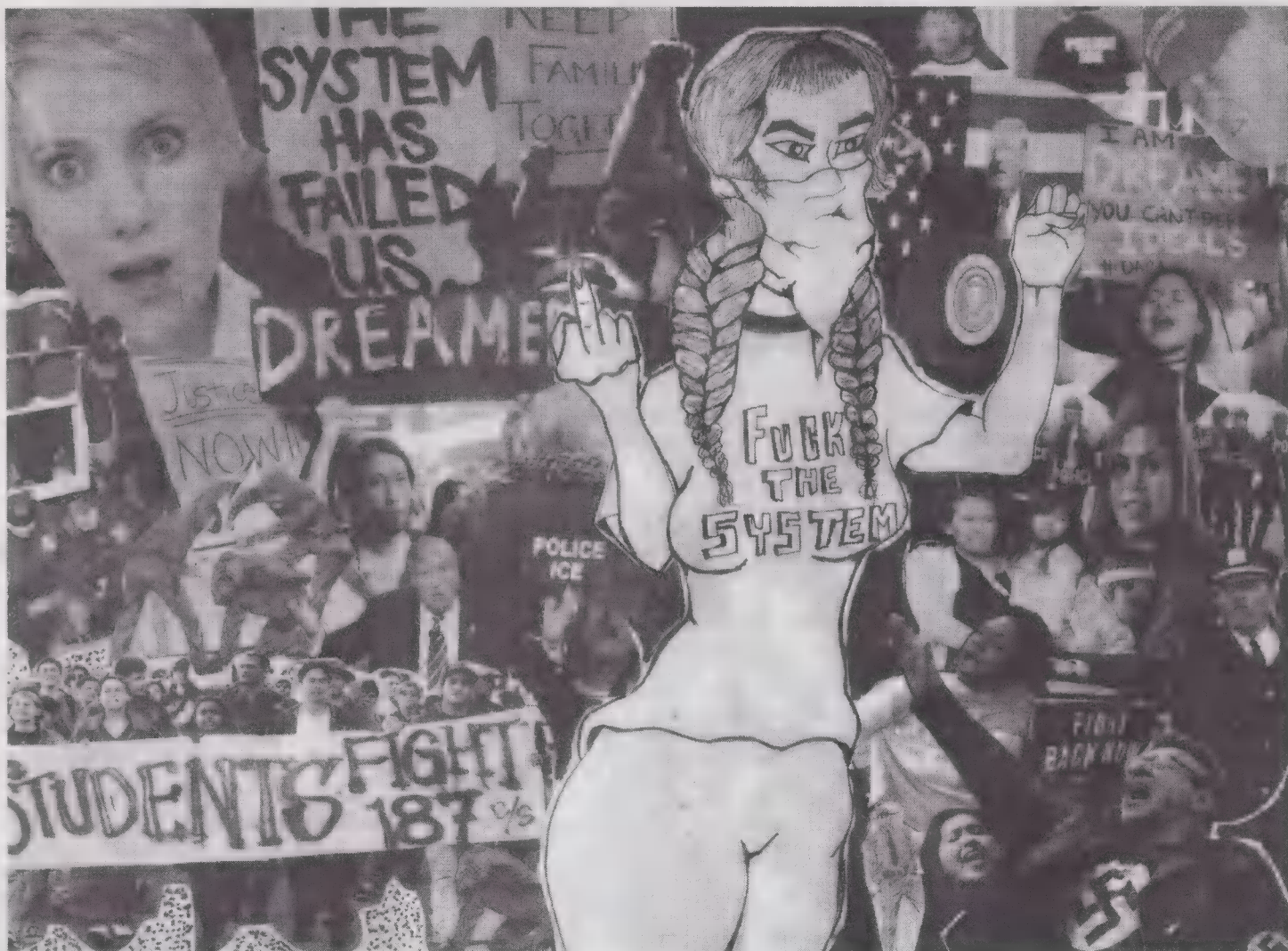
Undocumented.
What does it mean to be undocumented?
To understand the meaning of being undocumented,
We first have to know what it means to be documented.
In the middle of this Trump-ass mess and raids,
Who do you see in the news fighting for their rights?
What are the faces you ■■■ working on that 9 to 5
so this city could function?
Who got you to work on time this morning?
Who picked the veggies that ■■■ on your dinner plate
Mr. and Mrs. Vegan?
Who runs this city? Who runs this country?
Check your resources, your surroundings;
I am documented in every one of them.
Y carnal, why are you, of all the people, the one constantly capping?
Calling me beaner, mojada, indocumentada;
Don't you know better? Don't we wear the same uniform?
Piel canela, ojos negros, nopalotes en la frente.
You call ■■■ indocumentada but,
Jokes' on you!
Have you not ■■■ your facebook, your instagram,
and all your social media, your local newspaper, your T.V?
Who do you see?
We are taking over again and again,
Because we've been here.
Catch me in your history books real soon
Because I am documented
I am here.
Mr. Trump,
You say go back to your country.
I say I've been in my country,
Where is yours?
And before your name grimes up my poem
I just want to let you know
That I am not freeloading off your fucking government,
Because as far as I'm concerned,
If I'm going to school,
And I've never gone to bed without ■ meal in my stomach,
And I still have ■ roof over my head,
That's because I've earned it all by myself.
Un papel that legally "documents" my existence written
by ■ pinche gobierno corrupto that doesn't
even know where it stands don't ■■■ ■ thing to me;
I don't care too much for being documented
under that type of system.
Who's undocumented?
Do you not see me?
I am here.
Maybe I won't stay for too long, maybe I will.
But all that matters at this very moment is that I ■■■ here,
And what I'm doing while I am.
My mind has no barriers.
Mexico, China, Paris, under a bridge, in a mansion,

It doesn't matter.
I am still someone
I am still creating, organizing, doing, breathing, existing, living,
I am still here.
And that is all that matters,
That is all that matters.
So maybe if you saw beyond what's in front of your eyes
you'd understand that there is no such thing as being undocumented.
That borders only exist because we create them.
I choose to have a mind with no barriers,
A heart with no barriers, a soul with no barriers.
To be documented is to exist, to choose to live,
To dream,
To fight,
And aspire with no barriers.
That's why I ■■■ here. I am documented. And no one,
No one,
Could take that from me.

—Brenzy Solorzano
(ig: @lucysfuur)

Astroboy

Dec 10, 2016
u think ur past is so ugly
and that your now is so boring but what if now could be perfect?
what if minds could stay soaring?
what if someone could shake you and get you exploring
the depths of your spirit,
your love,
and your warring.
we'd wake from the haze
see brilliant
light in our gaze
we've been fooled to just follow Simon Says for our dayz(Z)e
did you know
it's not the bitches n money that raise your soul to the sky
for serenity's maze?
you've been a fool for too long
to think no woman could right what you've wronged
but boy we have the right to this song, this declaration,
this psalm.
here to unite for the dawn
to flip the light switches on
to get your microphones gone
to have some peace on the bus to have some peace on the street
i want my son coming home
i want no blood on his teeth
i want no blood on the bus
in the home
on the street
i want no blood on his teeth in the home
on the street



VAIKES A SALAZAR

**Catch me in your history books real soon
Because I am documented
I am here.**

i want the head to retreat i want the **head** to retreat
i want to know whose blood is on the meat that we eat.
i wanna know why the world
keep on turning the heat
up and away with the corn and the soy, and the poisonous wheat until
all that we eat
is the flies and the greed
what if i don't want a sprout for that seed
what if when it comes time for my womb to bleed i borne a universe
that will grow up and see
what his spirit could be.
how his spirit is me
is you
is the sky
it's the seed
of all life
it's the goddess's eye.

and she watches above
and she's shaking her head
she say she wants me to
tap you
dead in the head
why don't you do what you said
and know ya spirit is fed
not by the hate that you give
but all that love that you spread

can you do that for me?
can you never forget?
that the woman is sacred
and your soul is in debt.

—Paru
(ig: @parudelivers)

THE DINGHOLE REPORTS

RHYTHM CHICKEN

The potential
for unchecked
ridiculousness.

Ruckus and Resuscitation

It was a sunny Tuesday afternoon when I drove down to Milwaukee. I stopped at Rockhaus to pick up some drum supplies from Rusty. I hit the A&J Polish Deli for some much-needed food stuffs. I met my old boss for a tall Schlitz at Lulu's, and then quickly grabbed a 24-ounce can of Hamms at a gas station. This was no ordinary visit to Brewtown. I was here to go into the studio.

Shane, the drummer from Call Me Lightning, had requested I make an appearance in his video series of select Wisconsin drummers. Recognizing the potential for unchecked ridiculousness, I jumped at the chance. As I loaded my drums in the back door at Howl Street Recording Studio, a band of serious musicians were finishing up some kind of mixing or whatever. They noticed my crappy, rusted chickenkit, then the hard-worn and disgusting chickenhead. Not much was said, but I think they felt sorry for me.

Shane and I shot the breeze while I set up my seventy-five dollar drum set. He professionally placed two room mics strategically in front of my kit, close enough to catch the ruckus, yet far enough away to not get pulverized by it. My only acoustic request was to make sure the mics caught the sound of my Hamms cracking open. The video tech showed up and positioned his camera equipment just right. I mounted my mannequin head on top of my bass drum. It was time.

Dinghole Report #159: Howl Street Ruckus Recordings!

(Rhythm Chicken sighting #702.5!)

"We're rolling," the camera man said as I waited outside the frame. I pulled on my diseased and graying Chickenhead and approached the circus-like drumkit. After calmly sitting at my throne, I reached to my left and grabbed the chilled and sweating 24-ounce can of Hamms. "Tssssshhrrrk!" it said as I cracked it open. I took a calm gulp and then set it down. Then the tornado of ruckus rock overtook my very being! I pounded out a flurry of thunderous and chaotic rhythms! My chicken ears flopped around like two electrocuted flounders! The ruckus rolled along like ■ stampeding freight train!

After a rather heavy-hitting ninety seconds of unchecked chaos, I felt it was time for my *Hamms solo*! I calmed down the rhythm to just a bass drum and floor tom interlude. With my left hand I reached over and grabbed the Hamms for a mid-ruckus gulp of the good stuff! From the land of sky blue waters to my soiled and rotten beak, the Hamms was accurately captured on audio and visual! After a gallant refueling, I set the can back down and returned to the all-out assault on the senses. My ruckus rock built up to a very dramatic halt as I raised my wings towards the ceiling and awaited the screams of worship and adoration!... crickets.

I simply dropped my Regal Tip Quantum 3000s to the floor and reached behind me for my secret weapon. The Ruckus Logs were unsheathed and poised for attack! My stick click intro sounded like two surfboards colliding, *CLUNK, CLUNK, CLUNK, CLUNK*. Then for a brief yet victorious finale, my Ruckus Logs pounded upon my ailing drumkit without mercy. The ruckus became top-heavy as the rhythms pushed the boundaries of reality. The limit had been reached. The dismount was anything but graceful. Bizarre, gravitational currents pulled my body this way and that as various parts of my drum kit were sacrificed. Just before entering the black hole, I took one last sideways swing with ■ Ruckus Log. It met with the mannequin head and sent it flying out of the ball park. **KAPOW!**

My limp body was thrown to the side, landing in a crumpled pile next to the floor tom. I laid there motionless for a good couple minutes (about the same time as the entire performance!). Shane looked on from the behind the window of the mixing room. The cameraman kept filming, somewhat bewildered about when to stop. It was a most beautiful awkward silence as all three of us waited, and waited, and waited.... When the evil spirits finally left my body, I was able to prop myself up, walk over to the Hamms, and continue gulping to the 24th ounce. Studio time complete.

About three months later I found myself at the wedding of my good friend and local punk rock physician, the amazing Dr. Phil! Phil and Molly had just committed marriage in front of a couple hundred friends and family members. The ceremony was very

nice. The dinner was very nice. The evening was moving on and nothing seemed amiss. Phil and Molly had just started their first dance together as husband and wife. It was time to deploy and mobilize.

My local roadie crew of beer drinking weirdos helped me haul my weapons of audio offensiveness to the back of the dance floor. Molly noticed my stage-getting set up and held Phil so that he wouldn't notice the inevitable until it hit. I quickly tore off my dress shirt and threw on my stinky plain white T-shirt with the large anarchy sign on the front, still unlaundered from its last parade appearance! I pulled on the ratty, soiled Chickenhead and waited for their first dance to end.

Dinghole Report #60: Ruckus and Resuscitation!

(Rhythm Chicken sighting #704)

As the last dainty note of their dance song faded away, it was forcefully replaced with a deafening drum roll on my floor tom! Aunts and uncles jumped out of surprise! Even Phil was caught off guard as he whipped around with a "What the ????" Then the thunder rolled on! I pummeled my kit with every ounce of wedding ruckus I could muster! Those in attendance who knew of my ruckus hooted, hollered, and cheered. Those who knew not of my riotous ways, well, they were left scratching their heads in fearful confusion! As I later heard, the looks on some of their faces were ■ mix of fright and concern! **FRIGHT AND CONCERN!**

I continued shoveling forth dose after dose of infectious chaos rhythms until I felt my superhero work was done. I haphazardly dove over my bass drum and knocked over the rest of my dying drumset, falling to a dead-like pose, laying flat on my back. I thought the show was done. *Oh, was I wrong.* It was almost as if someone yelled, "Is there a doctor in the house?" Just then, my friend the good doctor sprang into action. In a full suit and tie, and just moments after his first dance with his wife, Phil suddenly hovered over me, checking for pulse, pumping my chest, and attempting to bring the Chicken back to life! The wedding crowd was beside itself! After a couple convincing medical attempts by the doc, my chicken body began to twitch and came back to life! Phil helped me to my feet and the crowd roared with approval! For saving the Rhythm Chicken's life at his



PHOTO BY KASIA ONISZCZUK. SHE TOOK THE ONE IN #100, TOO. OOPS.

From the land of sky blue waters to my soiled and rotten beak.

own wedding, Dr. Phil gets this chicken's notorious cluck of appreciation! CLUCK CLUCK CLUCK!

About two weeks later, there was yet another local wedding. My friends Brian and Phil (different Phil) were tying the knot. My Hen and I showed up early and had a few drinks while mingling with the crowd waiting for the outside ceremony to start. While we were chatting with various locals, Brian suddenly arrived and approached me. "Is he going to be making an appearance tonight?" he asked. I shuffled my feet and gave him a perplexed look. "Is *who* going to be making an appearance tonight?" Brian grabbed my arm and said, "You know. Mr. *Anarchy!*" I looked at my Hen as she looked away, not wanting to get stuck in this exchange. I took a sip from my drink and responded, "I'm not sure who you are talking about." Brian walked off.

Dinghole Report #161: Yet more Lack of Underwear! (Rhythm Chicken sighting #705)

A few hours later, my Hen and I set up my drumkit at the back of the outdoor party tent while the grooms were addressing the crowd during dinner. Brian noticed what we were up to and directed the crowd's attention to the back of the tent. Just then I pulled on my undignified disguise and began to rock the tent to kingdom come! I pounded out unrelenting waves of wedding ruckus as the friends and families all clapped and screamed. It all seemed like a rather normal wedding gig for this chicken. I made a final splash on the drums and stood to take a bow. People cheered as I exited the tent and began tearing down my stage. We proceeded to enjoy more drinks and dance the night away at the Rusty Nail Dance Shack and Groove Emporium (my friend Kevin's barn).

It wasn't until a few days later that I was going through my Hen's photos from that evening's wedding ruckus when I noticed a most humorous detail. While I was rolling out the barrel of ruckus, quite unable to see what was happening around me, Brian had found one of my signs from my last parade appearance. He stood next to the performing Chicken and proudly held the sign above his head. The sign had an arrow pointing down to Brian himself and it simply said "NO UNDERWEAR!"

I'm Mr. Anarchy, and I approve of this column.

—Rhythm Chicken

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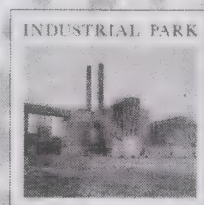
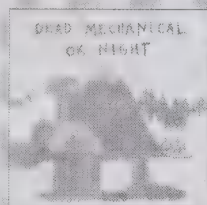
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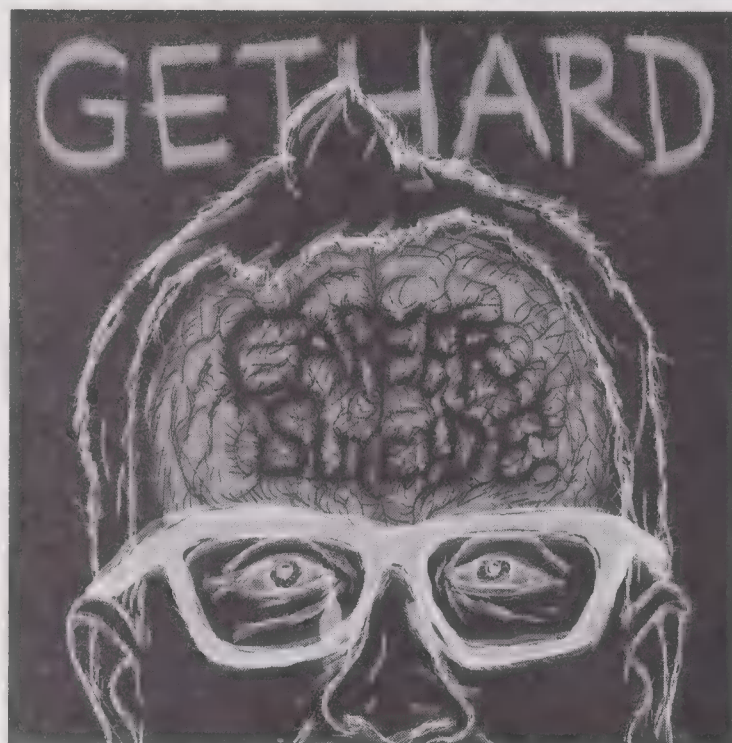
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"Sometimes comedy allows us to deal with stuff that we aren't quite ready to deal with. And depression is something that people still don't like to talk about it. Luckily, Chris is a hilarious storyteller and is willing to talk about all of it, to what can only be referred to as an ill-advised degree."

— Judd Apatow

"People have expressed to me that making comedy about depression is insensitive. I vehemently disagree. We need to start laughing about this stuff, so maybe we can finally be comfortable talking about it afterwards. I just try to make sure my jokes come from an honest place, and unfortunately for me being honest means coping to the fact that I once crashed a car on purpose."

— Chris Gethard

Don Giovanni Records

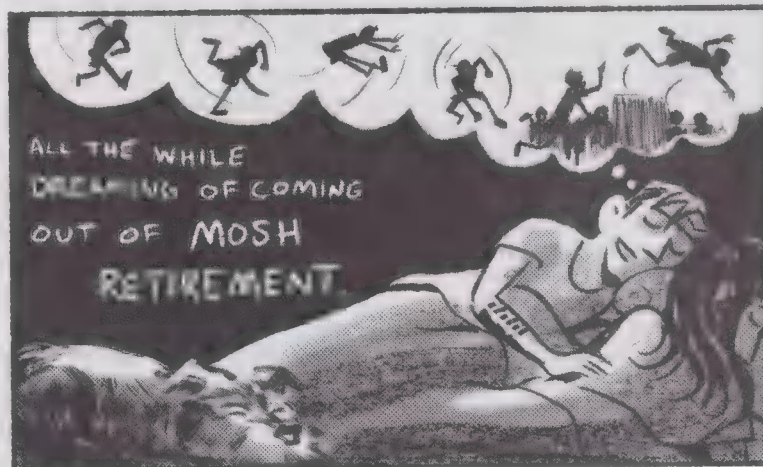
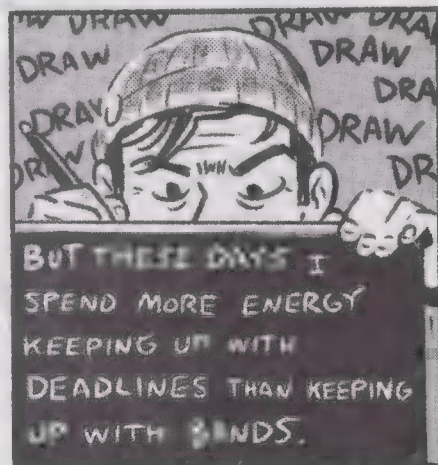
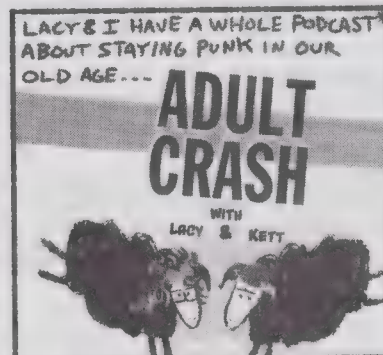
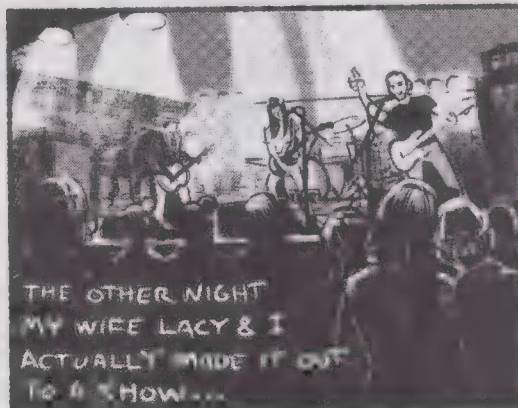
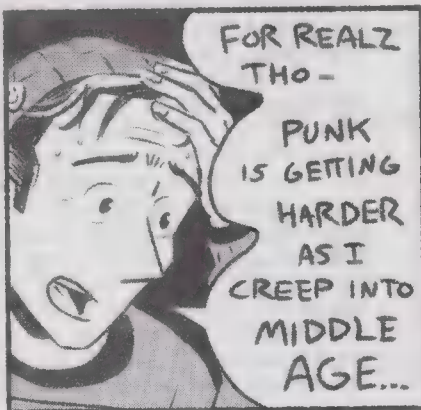
HEY
RAZORCAKE-
MY NAME
IS JIM
KETTNER

YOUR
FRIENDLY
NEIGHBORHOOD
PUNK
CARTOONIST.

TRUE STORY,
I TURN
40
THIS YEAR...

AND I GUESS
I'M STILL WAITING
FOR THAT

ADULT CRASH...



* SHAMELESS PLUG - WE ALSO HAVE A NEW GRAPHIC NOVEL
CALLED INK IN WATER OUT NOW!

KETT
NERD 17

I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DALE

Know your
product,
friends.

Know Your Monster

I was usually happy to play by myself or with my older sister Julie up until I started kindergarten in September 1975. I read whatever piqued my interest, especially those *Power Records* read-along comic and 7" sets (*The action "COMES ALIVE" As You Read!!*). My personal faves were *Escape from the Planet of the Apes*, *Spiderman* (*Mark of the Man-Wolf*), *Curse of the Werewolf*, and *Dracula* sets.

I've always had a soft spot for monster movies and for the actual monsters themselves. Watching the 1954 classic *Creature from the Black Lagoon* on television around the time before I started kindergarten, I vividly remember wondering why the people in this movie were being such dicks to the Gill-man, AKA the Creature. He didn't ask these invasive human explorer fucks to come poking around his watery 'hood, digging around for the bones of his fallen tribe, y'know? The filmmakers threw in the extra emotional drama of ol' Gilly wanting to make some amphibian-on-human time with the female explorer, Kay, which made sense to me as I got a few years older.

It happened in all the classic monster movies: humans were always scared of what they knew nothing about, which resulted in monsters getting hunted down and destroyed. I always thought that sucked. Still do. It might've been weird to some to see a five-year-old kid have empathy for creatures not of this world, but that was always me. I wasn't your usual kind of kid—or the adult you currently see before you—and if you don't like it, (to quote Angel Dust from *Rock 'N' Roll High School*) "You can put it where the monkey puts the nuts."

Mom was adamant about the cereal she kept in our kitchen when we were kids. The "sugar-coated garbage," as she called it, wasn't a regular option. The only time she'd purchase it was when we went on camping trips, making the vacations that much sweeter. During one of those trips in the summer of '75, I was sitting at the table in our trailer and spotted the cellophane-wrapped premium at the bottom of the box as I poured out some Super Sugar Crisp into my bowl. Knowing it was one of the four (*collect 'em all!*) 11" x 14" glow-in-the-dark monster posters advertised on the back of the box, I plucked it out to see who I was about to come face-to-face with: Frankenstein, Wolfman, Phantom of the Opera, or Creature from the Black Lagoon (!). I tore open the cellophane and

unfolded it to discover it was my big-lipped, green holmes in all his oil-painted portrait glory, the *Creature*! Not only was I stoked I beat the 4:1 odds on scoring the Gill-man, I couldn't wait to check out its glow-in-the-dark capabilities, which were pretty bitchin' to a five-year-old heathen child.

The artist responsible for the oil painting of the Creature was none other than Basil Gogos, who created an impressive amount of incredible cover illustrations for the infamous *Famous Monsters of Filmland* magazine during the '60s and '70s. (He recently passed away this past September at the age of eighty-eight.)

When I got home from camping, I went to the closet in my bedroom and slid the hanging clothes and coats outta the way to tape my newly acquired poster up on the wall. I then dragged my little stool over and situated it inside, slid the closet door closed behind me, and hung out in the dark with my pal the Creature, and talked about my day. You know, conversing with my make-believe buddy. Now, why did I go outta my way to put the poster up inside a closet? Why not just stick it up on the wall in the room? Because glow-in-the-dark paint doesn't work in the daytime, *that's* why. And since we didn't have a tree house or clubhouse in back of our house, a closet was the closest thing I had to a secret meeting area for my five-year-old self and Ol' Amphibian Face. I just had to slide open the closet door every few minutes to recharge the glow-in-the-dark paint. Now that I think about it, the Creature was the only make-believe pal I had as a lil' kid. Visits with the Gill-man got fewer and fewer once I started kindergarten a few months later and made friends at school.

Every single time I see or smell Super Sugar Crisp cereal, I immediately think of that poster. I just don't remember what the hell I did with it. Maybe my ma's got it tucked away with the rest of our childhood paper trails. I should probably ask her.

I'm fortunate to have friends whom I've known since we were kids. The bonds with my oldest pals started from kindergarten-forward. When I've told people over the years about my Gill-man, those who know me fairly well, usually say with a laugh, "Of course you did, Dale. That sounds like some shit you would do!" Others who don't know me have given me strange looks, like I might be trying to pull their legs. Does that mean I was/am a weird person? I don't

think so. If being weird includes seeing the good and positive in what a lot of people find frightening or threatening—when what they're scared of is simply misunderstood—then paint me a big, fat fuckin' weirdo.

Out of my parents' three children, I was the one who asked the most questions as a little kid. Sex, death, mental health—your name it—I was always needling my mom and dad about whatever was rattling around in that big noggin of mine. Ma usually took the time to explain things in a way I could grasp. There was this one instance in the grocery store. I must've been three or younger, because I didn't remember it until my ma told me later on. According to her, we were cruising through the aisles and our shopping cart came upon another lady pushing her cart. The woman must've been huge, because my mom said I was staring as we rolled up on her and I asked out loud, "Mom, is she going to have a baby?" My ma knew it was just an innocent question—and my Don Rickles chromosome couldn't have kicked in at that young age (not that I would ever mess with someone about their size, unless the ribbing was mutual). Nonetheless, the woman gave my mother the death stare as she rolled by. My ma took me aside a few moments later and told me I shouldn't ask about things like that out loud because the person might get upset. If that would've happened when I was out with my old man, I likely would've gotten five across the lip or a boot in the ass. It was a different dynamic with my dad.

I was taken to funerals early on as a kid. They were normal to me for as long as I could remember. I always found it a bit strange that some parents never took their kids to funerals, saying they were too young for "something like that." Too young for something like *what?* Life? Like my ma always says, "Death is part of life." The earliest service I recall was for one of my mother's oldest friend's mother. I didn't know the woman, but it was open casket, and because of my inquisitive, questioning nature, I paid respects alongside my ma. I remember peering in at the old woman. It looked like she was laid out on her back, sleeping in her fancy going-out clothes, complete with full makeup, including this light pink lipstick.

Maybe it was because she looked so normal that it didn't unnerve me, but I had questions for the drive home. "Hey, Mom, if she was dead, why would they dress her up all nice and put makeup on her?" "So



STEVE THUESON

It happened in all the classic monster movies: humans were always scared of what they knew nothing about.

the people who knew and loved her would remember her that way," she replied. "Some people need that." Hmm. Seemed odd to me why anyone would want people to look at them after they've died, especially people who loved them. They're already sad you're gone; why would you want them to look at your lifeless body and make them sadder? That was little Dale trying to make sense of a dead body and, depending on the way someone passes, I still think that way. Nuts to that. I'm getting torchéd and ground into a fine, powdery ash at the nearest crematorium as soon as I go. I want people laughing at whatever kind of memorial I have, not people staring in misery at a corpse that can no longer make with the funny.

The first time I saw someone with Down syndrome when I was a little kid, it scared the hell out of me. I remember the girl I first encountered with it. She was very loud and aggressive. My initial reaction was that she was some kind of human monster. She really fuckin' frightened me. My ma explained to me

the best way she could that the girl was just like the rest of us, except some tiny parts that made up her body were different, making her look and sound different from most people.

My father told me that just because they've got bent brains (way to go, dad, you could've written lyrics with Joey and Dee Dee), that doesn't mean we get to make fun of them. He wasn't having it, and rightly so. As I got a few years older, my elementary school integrated a couple of special needs classes, including kids who had Down syndrome. It was around that time my ma volunteered to assist with special needs kids at another elementary school nearby, so I was fully aware of what the deal with Downs was by then.

Unfortunately, not all the kids in my school were entirely aware of Down syndrome, and there were a few of them being straight up mean and/or ridiculing the special needs kids. That really pissed me off, and if teachers heard the lil' heartless bastards pulling that horseshittery, ears got yanked (remember, this was the late '70s).

My homie, bandmate, and fellow Razorcaker Jimmy Alvarado has stated that people from our generation and before didn't get into punk rock because we were well-adjusted. That brings up an excellent point. Just because some people aren't well-adjusted doesn't necessarily mean they're bad. For many, it means they have a different perception in certain aspects of their lives—or maybe life altogether. Punk rock has been equally misinterpreted and misunderstood for decades, and it goes back to how humans are scared of what they know nothing about, which results in the monster getting hunted down and destroyed.

The Saints once penned an excellent tune entitled "Know Your Product" for their masterpiece 1978 LP, *Eternally Yours*.

Know your product, friends.
Know your monster.

—Designated Dale
designateddale@yahoo.com



RAZORCAKE 31



In Memory of Victoria Scalisi

Victoria was bad-ass warrior of a woman.
Damad were a band ahead of their time.

The first time I saw them was at ABC NO RIO in 1996. Seeing and meeting both Damad and Victoria was life changing; lasting friendships were formed. This is one my favorite photos from that show. It's been reproduced several times, but it still remains my favorite and seems fitting to honor her. Victoria Scalisi was a generous soul, a talented artist, and a fierce vocalist. She was a wonderful mother and dear friend to many. I treasure the little time we had together. I value the huge impact and inspiration she had on me and everyone who she touched in her life. There have been many wonderful memorials written in honor of Victoria since she lost her battle with cancer. Her legacy will not be forgotten. She was loved by all.

Rest in Power.

—Chris Boarts Larson



Chris Boarts Larson Photo Column - Damad

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David, ABC NO RIO, NYC - 1998



ONE PUNK'S GUIDE TO PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING

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GORGEOUS GEORGE

WE'VE BEEN WATCHING AND FOLLOWING PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER.

I grew up watching WWF (World Wrestling Federation) Saturday mornings in my hometown of Moorhead, Minn. I loved—and hated—all the late '80s stars like Randy Savage, Ultimate Warrior, Andre The Giant, Mr. Perfect, Ted DiBiase, Bobby Heenan, Roddy Piper, and of course, Hulk Hogan. I had no idea then, at age nine or so, that I was living in a state steeped in wrestling history. I wasn't even aware that there were other wrestling companies out there fighting for my viewership, and that it was a cutthroat business with a mafia-like history of backstabbing, double-crosses, and betrayals. While I was watching Hulk Hogan beat up every bad guy who came his way, I had no clue that just a few years before, he had been lured away from the AWA (American Wrestling Association)—a longstanding and successful wrestling promotion based in my home state—to the WWF, their New York rivals. Hogan's jump from Minnesota to New York was devastating. It ultimately put the AWA out of business. These kinds of stories were absolutely fascinating to me. As I got older and started to read books on the subject, I was so excited to learn of the history that happened right in my backyard and beyond. Once the internet became available and the information started to flow, I had a field day.

From that point on, it was my goal to know more about the history of pro wrestling than anyone else in the room. I may not know who the current WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment) champion is, but I can tell you all about which belt was used for "Nature Boy" Buddy Rogers' month-long, 1963 WWWF (World Wide Wrestling Federation) championship run and why.

As the years passed, I noticed more and more punks getting into wrestling. I started to wonder why. Lars Frederickson, of Rancid fame and lifelong wrestling fan, said, "Maybe because it's like an outcast thing." It's true wrestling fans, like punks, suffer from a certain stigma. Often, true fans of both are encyclopedic in their knowledge, making them an outsider surrounded by casual fans.

Even when punk became a hell of a lot more tolerated by the mainstream in the mid-1990s (even lucrative), its true base remained marginalized. Wrestling has always carried a similar mark. Even at its most popular, much of wrestling's fan base is the object of criticism, insults, and stereotypes. The wrestling arena, just like the basement or DIY venue, is somewhere you can go to be among fellow freaks and weirdos.

Punks and wrestling go back to the genre's inception, and in one case, strangely, even before that. In the early '70s, Portland, Ore.'s Pacific Northwest Wrestling (PNW) territory had a young heel (bad guy) who was breaking all the rules. Beauregarde (real name Larry Pitchford) was a rocker who couldn't be tamed. He was one of the first wrestlers to use original music to accompany him to the ring. He even released an album in 1971 of psychedelic-influenced tunes. On it, a seventeen-year-old named Greg Sage played guitar. A few years later, Sage went on to form the highly influential Portland staple, The Wipers.

The Dictators, another influential band, had an affinity for wrestling that manifested in the band member's stage names. "Handsome" Dick Manitoba, Ross "The Boss" Friedman, and Scott "Top Ten" Kempner all took their names in an effort to mimic their beloved sport and its assortment of flamboyant characters.

Early L.A. punk band the Angry Samoans lifted their name straight off the popular tag team The Wild Samoans, who spent most of the '70s and '80s in the NWA (National Wrestling Alliance) and WWF.

Legendary punks, The Cramps, in 1981 released a cover of the amazing song "The Crusher," which was originally performed by Minneapolis garage band The Novas in 1964. A few years later saw the appearance of The Dwarves, and most noticeably their guitar player, HeWhoCannotBeNamed sporting a Mexican Lucha Libre mask on stage. (Although, I suspect the mask is more of a ploy to hide his identity than a true display of wrestling affection.)

In the late 1980s, wrestling got its first true punk rock spokesmen. The always controversial ANTiSEEN from Charlotte, N.C. were hardcore wrestling fans who took their love to sometimes extreme levels. Singer Jeff Clayton often carries a microphone stand wrapped in barbed wire on stage and uses it to bust himself open, bleeding all over the place. The band has an unabashed affection for wrestling's golden age (the 1950s through the early '80s), as well as more extreme aspects such as Japanese death matches and the early years of ECW (Extreme Championship Wrestling).

Tony Erba, of the insanely wild '90s Cleveland, OH bands H100s, 9 Shocks Terror, and Gordon Solie Motherfuckers is another well-known wrestling aficionado and connoisseur of the sport. I got my first death match tapes from his Crimson Mask Video VHS distro after meeting him at a show in Minneapolis in the late '90s. As with ANTiSEEN, record titles, album artwork, and other merch from these bands often displayed wrestlers from the golden age on up through the ECW era. The Sheik, Fred Blassie biting Rikidozan, and Axl and Ian Rotten's infamous "Taipei Death Match" have all made appearances.

The '90s powerviolence scene had some wrestling representation as well. Most famously is perhaps the cover of Spazz's 1997 LP, *La Revancha*, which features Cuban born wrestler, Konnan, waving a Mexican flag while wearing the AAA (Asistencia Asesoría y Administración) heavyweight title belt. But, it was the Pennsylvania band, The Ultimate Warriors, however, that really connected the break-neck aspects of both lifestyles. Their 2002 album, *Our Gimmick Is Wrestling*, is a non-stop barrage of samples and references to wrestling's most violent, charismatic, and down-right weird aspects.

Then there's the curious case of Bob Mould. In 1999, the one-time singer and guitar player for legendary Minneapolis punk band, Hüsker Dü, found himself in a unique position. A die-hard wrestling fan since childhood, Mould was somehow invited by then Executive Vice President of WCW (World Championship Wrestling), Eric Bischoff, to a few of the company's live events. This led to him being hired to fill the "gorilla position." His job was to be the last person a wrestler saw on their way down the ramp. From there, he gave them any last-minute changes in their matches, as well as communicated with the referee via wireless ear piece.

Perhaps the strangest of all, though, is the brief moment The Misfits became wrestlers. In 1999, Canadian-born, Mexico-trained wrestler, Vampiro, was causing WCW bookers some headaches. They had no idea how to use this odd, corpse-painted, dreadlocked, yet popular, weirdo. So, Vampiro made a few suggestions, one of which was to bring in his favorite band to act as his entourage. The Misfits' tenure was short lived, culminating in a cage match between "Dr. Death" Steve Williams and Jerry Only, with the rest of the band dumping barbecue sauce all over Williams' manager Oklahoma (Ed Ferrara), but it was a sight to be seen. ("Here comes Doyle, and the other one!" Bobby "The Brain" Heenan remarked as he called the action during a Misfits match.)

But it's not just the punks who are into wrestling. The wrestlers are into punk too—at least a few of them, anyway. The punk rock "look" has been used in wrestling for decades. From The Road Warriors' spikes and mohawks throughout the 1980s, to The Rockers and The Midnight Express with their amazingly '80s pseudo-new wave spandex, wrestling has always tried—and mostly failed—to properly capture punk rock. The reason for this is simple. The wrestlers weren't punks. As with television and film portrayals of the subculture, the attempts at capturing the spirit, look, and attitude of punk falls laughably short of authentic.

The mid-'90s saw the beginnings of a shift in this trend with both Raven (Scott Levy) wearing a Suicidal Tendencies shirt in his ECW matches and the debut of Amy Dumas in 1999. As Lita in the WWF, Dumas was arguably the first true punk rocker to get over in one of the big companies. Her style, while still flashy and costumey by any punk's standards, seemed much more authentic. The reason for this was simple: Dumas grew up in the punk scene. There was at last a real fan of punk rock in the squared circle.

More would come. In later years, Daniel Bryan (Bryan Danielson) came to the ring wearing a modified Dead Kennedys shirt (the "DK" easily changed to "DB"), but it was the break out of CM Punk (Phill Brooks) that brought the combination of punk rock and wrestling to crescendo.

It's all right there in the name: gimmicky on its surface, but descriptive in its connotation. Brooks is an actual, honest-to-god fan of punk rock, incorporating many elements of it into his persona and merchandise, beyond just the name. A strict adherent to the straightedge lifestyle, Brooks has used this in both heel (bad guy) and babyface (good guy) roles. As a babyface, he extols the health benefits of abstaining from drugs and alcohol, using his station as a role model to help kids stay clean. As a heel, he brilliantly portrays the militant, holier-than-thou side that straightedge is known to sometimes produce, admonishing others for their personal choices while preaching his doctrine of clean living (this is especially effective with wrestling's more beer-friendly crowds).

Punks in the squared circle generally have strong roots in independent wrestling, working in front of small crowds for very little money. CM Punk, Daniel Bryan, Raven, Lita, et cetera all cut their teeth on the independent circuit. The parallels one can draw between the life of an indie wrestler and that of a DIY punk band are numerous and often true. According to indie wrestler Matt Cross, "What is more DIY than an indie wrestler? I have no agent, everything goes through me... I have my own shirts. I have a guy design the shirts and I hawk the shirts."

It's hard to argue with that.

Minneapolis-based wrestler, Arik "The Anarchist" Cannon has taken his love for punk rock, perhaps further than anyone. With a studded and patched vest, and Ramones and Operation Ivy-themed

barred approach was both a very popular style to watch and an unpredictable style to combat. This new form of entertainment was an instant hit on the carnival circuit

In exchange for a cash prize, local tough men were encouraged to defeat these "hookers" as part of the carnival's "athletic show." They rarely succeeded and were often left battered, bruised, or worse. Many wrestlers eked out a living making side bets with locals, displaying the first cracks in historically recognized legitimate acts of athletic showmanship.

Out of this system rose some of wrestling's original superstars, most notably, Frank Gotch and George Hackenschmidt, two legitimate tough guys with real wrestling talent. The popularity Gotch, a small-town kid from Humboldt, Iowa, and "The Russian Lion" developed became one of the best rivalries in the history of the sport. Their second of only two meetings drew over 30,000 fans to Chicago's Comiskey Park in 1911, cementing their names in the history books.

While Gotch, Hackenschmidt, and others were busy keeping traditional Greco-Roman and Catch wrestling in the headlines, another school was emerging. On the carnival circuit, gambling was often involved in the athletic shows, and thus began the shift from honest matches to less-than-honest ones.

Carnival owners and bookers began encouraging wrestlers to dress in lavish costumes and invent impressive backstories to enhance their appeal. While athletic talent was still a must, showmanship and spectacle grew in importance. Gambling was always rampant

The wrestling arena, just like the basement or DIY venue, is somewhere you can go to be among fellow freaks and weirdos. ★★

merch, Cannon operates and travels with the same principles of most touring punk bands. Cannon's biannual "Wrestlepalooza" shows, held at legendary Minneapolis venue, First Avenue (where I saw my first big punk shows in the early '90s) showcases not just wrestling, but burlesque troupes, and, you guessed it, punk bands. These sold-out shows draw big crowds and often turn fans of one showcase piece into fans of another. Punk rock and wrestling are quickly becoming inseparable in Minnesota.

A similar phenomenon is emerging in Gainesville, Fla. Fest Wrestling—run by the yearly punk fest organizer, Tony Weinbender—has been a hot territory for up-and-coming indie stars. The first promotion to be truly born from the punk scene—not just co-opting or adopting aspects of it—Fest Wrestling's bi-monthly shows are quickly helping to change how punk and wrestling come together.

This is all well and good, but how did we get here? How did this bizarre, billion-dollar business full of weirdos and musclebound freaks get started?

While wrestling is historically recognized as an ancient display of combat and skill with origins in ancient cultures from around the world, professional wrestling has its roots right here in the U.S.A. with good old American con-men and entrepreneurs.

The Carnies, The Hookers, and The Gamblers

Modern professional wrestling's roots go back nearly as far as humankind, but the short branch on the long family tree of wrestling that spawned what we know today as professional wrestling can be traced back to 1870s England. Catch-as-catch-can style was a system of wrestling that encouraged combatants to incorporate any and all holds and moves into their repertoire to best opponents. It was brutal, and these athletes or hookers (named for the secret submission holds or "hooks" they used to end matches quickly), seemed to truly enjoy hurting each other. This no-holds-

in wrestling, but since bookers and wrestlers were staging bouts, secrecy became of utmost importance if they expected to continue making money.

To be able to speak openly about the staged nature of the events without anyone else knowing, they developed a secret language. Kayfabe, as it came to be known, is still used today, albeit mostly as a recognition of tradition rather than any useful secret code. Using Kayfabe, the bookers, carnies, and wrestlers could discuss plans of milking their marks right in front of them. Conning hayseeds out of their hard-earned cash was the name of the game.

Legitimate wrestlers, or "shooters," were becoming less common, and with Frank Gotch's retirement from wrestling in 1913—and with no real star to take his place—fixed and predetermined matches became the norm. To the carnie's dismay, however, spectators wanted what they were no longer providing. The con-men found themselves amid a backlash. The hayseeds weren't having it anymore. Fans wanted to see legitimate tough guys hurt each other, not flamboyant showmen whom they suspected were on the take. Add that to the languid pacing of the scripted matches and you had fans leaving in droves. Wrestling's popularity plummeted, and by 1920, something had to be done.

Toots Mondt and Slam Bang Western Style Wrestling

A spark was lit in 1919 that changed the face of professional wrestling forever. Three men formed an organization that provided the basis for how the business is run to this day. The Gold Dust Trio consisted of Ed "Strangler" Lewis (the era's most recognizable star and champion), his manager Billy Sandow, and the real genius behind the operation and former carnival wrestler Toots Mondt. The changes and innovations Mondt implemented are the cornerstone of modern professional wrestling and have remained largely unchanged for nearly a century.

MISFITS AND VAMPIRO



Debuting in 1912 to very little fanfare, Mondt, ■ miner's son, refused to follow in his father's footsteps. Determined to make it in the wrestling business, he was eventually taught the art of hooking, a skill that proved very useful down the line.

With wrestling crowds at ■ all-time low, Mondt knew something had to change if anyone was ever going to make any real money. In 1919, after joining forces with Lewis and Sandow, Mondt hatched a plan to bring fans back on a regular, paying basis. He called it "Slam Bang Western Style Wrestling." It was a mix of traditional Greco-Roman, Catch, and freestyle wrestling, along with elements of boxing and old-fashioned lumberjack-style brawling. It was fast paced, exciting, and, for the most part, what we still watch today. Within six months, it had changed professional wrestling forever.

Wrestlers had so much more to do in the ring. Under the rules of Slam Bang Western Style, body slams, aerial maneuvers, and fisticuffs were not only allowed, but encouraged. Action spilled out of the ring and onto the floor. It was ■ wild and bloody form of entertainment, and the masses bought it hook, line, and sinker.

While many matches in the previous decades had been fixed for gambling purposes, Mondt created—and convinced Lewis and Sandow to go along with—the idea of the "finish," a predetermined ending that would entice the crowd to come back to ■ more. Count-outs, double-count-outs, and time-limit draws were amazingly effective ways to lure fans into coming back for rematches—not to mention the dozens of "submission holds" and other finishing moves Mondt invented to wow the fans. Gone were the days of gambling on fixed bouts, as the trio decided that the price of admission was how they were going to make their money. Gambling was strictly forbidden among wrestlers and promoters, giving ■ false legitimacy to a sport that had never been *more* scripted.

Lewis was the obvious choice for World's Champion, but Mondt and the gang knew fans would eventually grow tired of the same face on the top of every card, so it was decided that, from time to time, Lewis would lose his title, or "put over" another wrestler.

This insignificant notion by today's standards was revolutionary in 1919. This became known ■ "working a program," or developing an ongoing storyline to keep fans interested, and was integral to success in this new way of doing business. No one would ever believe that "The Strangler" would lose on purpose, but for match after match to have significance, he had to be shown as vulnerable. This setup, of course, led to rematches in which Lewis regained his title in a glorious comeback of epic proportions and record gate receipts, of course.

In the 1920s, the trio were the guys you wanted to work for. Wrestlers flocked to their stable because, unlike any other promoter up to this point, with The Gold Dust Trio, you received a regular paycheck. This was another innovation, and a necessary one. Without regular pay, there was nothing to stop ■ disgruntled wrestler from going to the public about the scripted nature of the matches. Everyone got paid, everyone played along protecting the business and its secrets, and everyone was happy and fed.

The trio developed a centralized promotion, handling bookings all over the country. They lured talent away from almost every carnival and small-time circuit. A hierarchy of talent was established, with Lewis on top. Those with enough legitimate talent were permitted to work programs with him and were pushed to the top tier. Those who might have less talent but were entertaining in other ways were kept on the mid or lower cards.

Wrestlers who weren't considered "American" enough—either by surname, first language, or color—were rarely allowed to challenge for the World's Championship and were often kept on the lower tiers, unless working territories with large immigrant populations that shared that ethnicity. Mondt and the gang knew how to work the crowd, and they used every ■ at their disposal—race included—to bring them in.

Race has always been an issue in professional wrestling. The very nature of heels versus babyfaces is that one of them (the heel), is generally some form of "other." This otherness, from the early carnival days, up to and including right here and now, often refers to race or

country of origin. Promoters, from day one, knew that using race to get heat (a reaction from the crowd, generally cheers and encouragement for babyfaces, and boos and resentment for heels) would keep the seats filled and the gate receipts high. Using the crowd's built-in prejudices was an extremely effective way to generate ■ draw.

In the years following WWII, the obvious go-tos were Germans, Russians, and Japanese. Sometimes these wrestlers were legitimately from these countries, but often, their gimmicked ethnicity was nothing more than a well-crafted "work" (a scripted aspect of the storyline, as opposed to a "shoot," which is a real-life aspect). Cartoonish Germans and Russians were occasionally given heel title runs, but these were simply a ploy for the triumphant, white, All-American to win it back in ■ spectacular fashion.

The '70s ushered in an anti-Arab sentiment, which made stars like The Iron Sheik (real life Iranian, Hossein Khosrow Ali Vaziri) one of the most famous heels of all time. Native American wrestlers were also heavily racialized through the years, although often as babyfaces. Many of these wrestlers were of questionable heritage, but even with that, what may have been meant as flattery of culture (decorative headdresses, ceremonial dances, et cetera), ended up, especially in hindsight, appearing as mockery at best. Exploitation is ■ more accurate description.

In 2003, Triple H (Paul Levesque) cut a promo (an on-air speech meant to rile the crowd and build heat for an upcoming match) on African American star Booker T that summed up the wrestling

cartoonish martial artists for Asians. For white wrestlers, the ethnicity of their opponent is fair game when cutting promos, often sinking to embarrassing depths.

Latino, Asian, and Samoan wrestlers have fared slightly better than African Americans when it comes to championship representation—Giant Baba, Pedro Morales, Yokozuna, Eddie Guerrero, Rey Mysterio, Alberto del Rio, The Rock, among others, have all worn the belt, but have all done plenty of time as racially stereotyped heels as well. For many, these gimmicks are the only ones they've ever had on U.S. soil. Historically, in the United States, non-white wrestlers are often nothing more than an "other" for the white wrestlers to defeat.

Back to the Goldust Trio.

From time to time, ■ wrestler might get upset about his spot in the food chain. Maybe he thought he should be pushed higher on the card. Maybe he thought he should be the champ and not "The Strangler." On the rare occasion ■ wrestler got out of line, threatened to expose the business, or refused to go along with the "work" and the "program," his next bout would be with the original enforcer himself, Toots Mondt.

Mondt was such a good hooker that he was legitimately feared throughout the business. If you found yourself in the ring with Mondt, you were made to realize very quickly that you had better rethink your actions. He had no qualms about leaving you a broken, bloody mess. This genuine fear of Mondt and the fact that everyone was making

Professional wrestling has its roots right here in the U.S.A. with good old American con-men and entrepreneurs. ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

business' policy towards black wrestlers. He said, "Somebody like you doesn't get to be a world champion." A work to get heat? Maybe, but history backs up his words.

Black wrestlers have been a staple of professional wrestling dating back to, at least, the 1870s (a wrestler named Viro Small often gets the credit for being the first *verifiable* African American pro wrestler, making his debut in 1870). Like professional baseball, wrestling also had black-only promotions. Stars of these territories were considered by many to be among the best in the world, but were only allowed into white promotions when the proper heat was needed. Lou Thesz, in his book, *Hooker*, had this to say about '50s and '60s African American star, Luther Lindsay: "Like many other industries, wrestling was not open to African-American wrestlers during his career, so it was an amazing accomplishment for Luther to even learn his craft. His place in history is not because he was black; it is in spite of the fact he was black."

Lindsay, and many others, such as Bobo Brazil were trailblazers for black wrestlers to come. In 1962, Brazil defeated "Nature Boy" Buddy Rogers for the NWA championship (a first for an African American). Through a series of contrivances, however, the NWA board did not recognize the title change. Ron Simmons was the next black wrestler to win a major championship in ■ white-owned promotion, but it wasn't until 1992, a full thirty years later.

The Rock (Dwayne Johnson, half black, half Samoan) has had numerous title runs and is, by far, the most successful non-white wrestler in history. Combine this with Booker T's championship win in 2000, and you have a few very clear exceptions that prove the rule. Triple H's words about Booker T have remained largely true.

This lack of title recognition isn't the only factor in wrestling's often racist history. A quick survey of the gimmicks given to non-white wrestlers is an embarrassment. Flamboyant characters are common within the squared circle, but for wrestlers with non-European heritage, this flamboyance is often played out as blatant racial stereotyping. Gang members and thugs for blacks, esés or matadors for Latinos, and

more money than ever kept most mouths shut. Mondt rarely had to act in his role as enforcer.

The wrestling business had its origins in legitimate violence. While under Mondt's tutelage, the match finishes may have been decided in advance, but this did nothing to curb the very real violence that still took place. Until at least the 1980s and the rise of WWF's family-oriented packaging, the business of professional wrestling remained extremely bloody. Legitimate chops, punches (known as "potatoes," and often came with an angry "receipt"), kicks, and bone-breaking holds were very much the norm. Seeing ■ wrestler bleed profusely was not only common, but expected. Freely flowing blood was one of the ways to maintain the legitimacy of the sport. You had to keep up appearances.

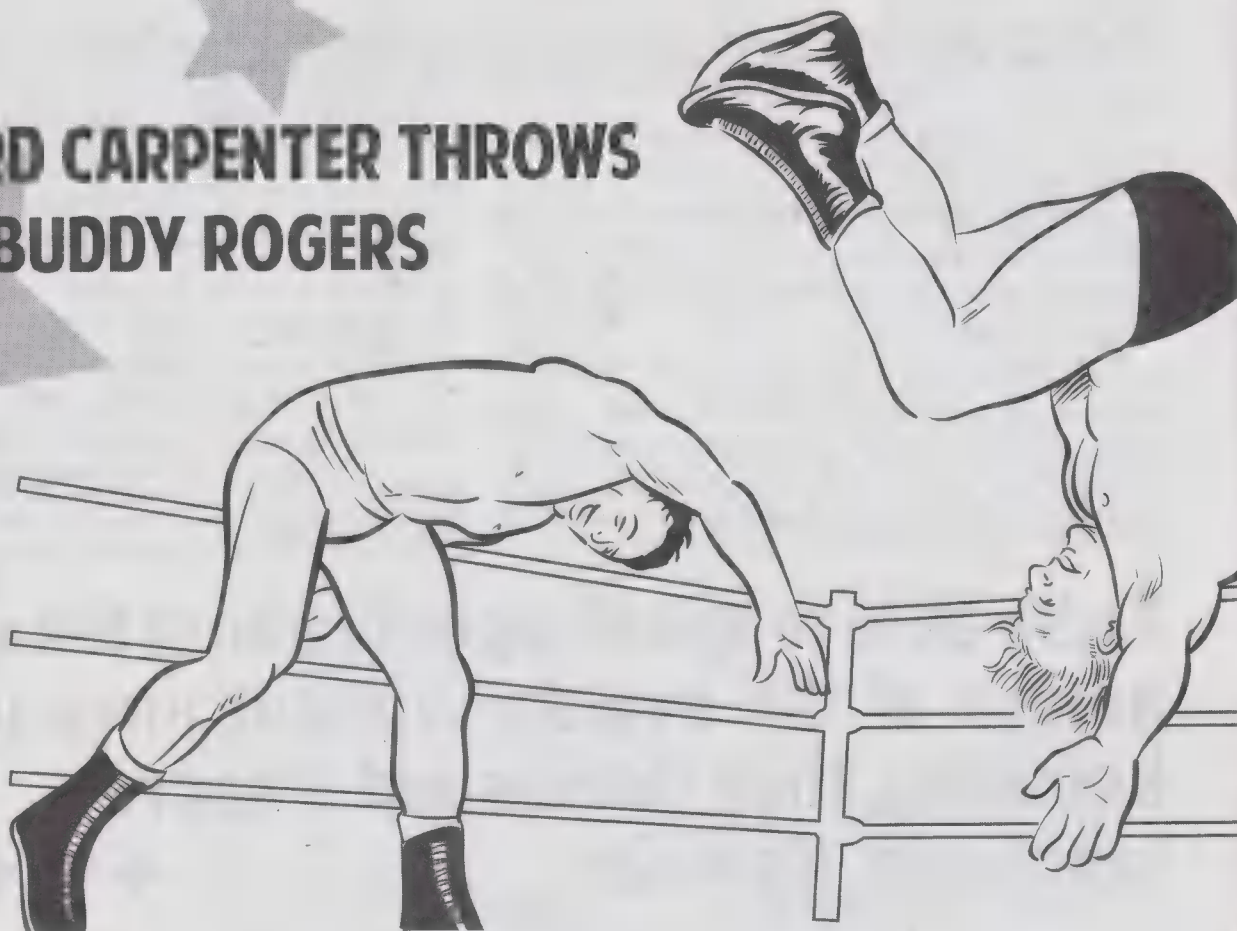
Television and the Territories

The Gold Dust Trio disbanded in 1928, but the style of wrestling they popularized stayed intact. Strangler Lewis remained an active title holder and contender into the 1940s, but with the Gold Dust Trio no longer active as a booking entity, many wrestlers and promoters saw the need for another organized central office to oversee things. It took some time, but in 1948, ■ group of promoters from around the U.S. got together and formed what became the dominant force in professional wrestling for the next thirty years.

The National Wrestling Alliance (NWA) could not have come along at a better time. Television, still in its infancy, embraced professional wrestling from day one. The larger-than-life characters, melodramatic storylines, and physical violence were perfect for the new medium. Television and wrestling were tailor-made for each other, and they used each other to make a lot of money.

Early television stars like Gorgeous George used this new platform to become household names. Not the world's greatest athlete, Gorgeous George more than made up for this with his exciting

EDOUARD CARPENTER THROWS BUDDY ROGERS



showmanship. With his bleached blonde hair, entrance music, lavish robes, and hoity-toity air, Gorgeous George brought a spectacle to wrestling, and to television, the likes of which no one had ever seen. He was pro wrestling's first true villain. He cheated at every opportunity, insulted the crowd, and ran from the babyface whenever things didn't go his way. Gorgeous George had the unique ability to make everyone in the world hate him just by strolling to the ring. What he did in his time was the model for all the best heels to come, and many of the babyfaces too. He was also the first face of one of wrestling's other popular ways to get heat: homophobia.

As with its race issues, wrestling's historic attitude toward LGBTQ communities is largely mirrored by society. It's a bigger picture issue that often gets played out in a wrestling ring, with thousands of fans, sadly, cheering it on. Gorgeous George's gimmick was that of an effeminate, prim and proper aristocrat. To the television viewers of the 1950s, he may as well have been a Martian. "How could a man act like that?" they wondered.

Effeminate-acting wrestlers continued riling up crowds for decades. In the mid-'80s, veteran wrestler, Adrian Adonis, adopted a "gay" gimmick that was met by the ire of Roddy Piper, who, as the babyface, basically gay-bashed him into oblivion. This wasn't Piper's only homophobic program. In 1996, Dustin Rhodes began using his now much watered-down androgynous gay panic character, Goldust, to get under the skin of Piper. In true ignorant fashion, the WWF brass had Goldust repeatedly come on to Piper over the course of several weeks, culminating in what was essentially a televised hate crime.

Adonis and Goldust are the short list of wrestlers posing as gay to gain heat. In the 2000s, tag teams such as Lenny and Lodi, and later Billy and Chuck were portrayed as gay couples in an attempt to stir up some heat. They caught the eye of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), which said that they were "...presented with the intention to incite the crowd to the most base homophobic behavior." They were absolutely right. Wrestling crowds roundly exposed themselves as intolerant homophobes.

The strangest thing about homophobia in the wrestling business is simply, especially since the 1980s or so, how homoerotic the whole thing really is. Fans to this day see no issue with admiring and cheering for "Ravishing" Rick Rude or "Mr. Ass" Billy Gunn, glorified male strippers who oozed homoeroticism. One of wrestling's most popular bad boys of all time, Shawn Michaels, of DX and The Rockers fame, even posed nude for *Playgirl*, for chrissakes. The disconnect is staggering.

To the wrestling world, homophobia was just another way to get heat, an added "other" to be exploited and manipulated, but most gay performers have had to keep the secret of their non-gimmick, real-life homosexuality a secret from the business.

There have been some, such as Pat Patterson, who have been lucky enough to be accepted as gay since the '70s, albeit never acknowledged on television. Patterson's homosexuality remained an open secret until 2014 when he officially came out on an episode of WWE's *Legends' House* (with Roddy Piper in attendance, of all people).

Others, though, such as Chris Kanyon, were forced to keep their mouths shut out of fear of reprisal. Wrestling writer, Dave Meltzer said of Kanyon: "He kept his homosexuality secret, but it tore him up when other wrestlers would, in front of him, talk about how much they hated gays or made gay jokes." Chris Kanyon committed suicide in 2010.

While still struggling with its homophobia issues, the WWE, on its surface, appears to be making strides. In 2013, for the first time, an active roster member, Darren Young, came out as gay. The WWE released an official statement supporting Young, with many fellow wrestlers tweeting their support as well.

Meanwhile, back in the 1950s, the U.S., Japan, and Mexico were carved up into territories, each run by a different NWA board member. These bosses had a mafia-like understanding that no other promoter would run shows in another's territory unless special arrangements were made. Talent pools would no longer be raided, but deals were often struck to trade or loan talent if a wrestler was unhappy or if a storyline or program might benefit from fresh faces. If a rival non-

NWA promotion opened up shop, the bosses would band together to shut it down. Intimidation and threats of violence against rogue promotions were common tactics. Not playing the game was no longer an option by the 1950s.

The NWA named Orville Brown as its first World Champion, but after an auto accident ended his career, the title was vacated and handed to his number one contender, a twenty-two-year-old named Lou Thesz. An accomplished hooker, Thesz was chosen for his ability to enforce the new rules on anyone who didn't play along. If a wrestler didn't lose to him when and how the NWA board told you to, they were going to get hurt. Thesz traveled the country, defeating regional champs, unifying the titles into one—the National Wrestling Alliance World Heavyweight Championship.

It was decided that the NWA champ would not belong to any one promotion. Instead, he would travel from territory to territory challenging that region's top stars. Often, the buildup for these programs started a year in advance. Top heels were also sent around to the territories to run programs to sufficiently hype the toughness of the local talent. When the champ arrived, it was important fans believe their guy had a shot at the belt, even though title changes were decided by the territory bosses at annual NWA board meetings.

To be able to speak openly about the staged nature of the events without anyone else knowing, they developed a secret language, Kayfabe.



It was a good system, but cracks emerged. Not all the promoters liked being governed by a board. Within ten years, several promoters left the organization, most notably Verne Gagne in the upper Midwest and Vince McMahon Sr. in New England. Their respective organizations—the American Wrestling Association (AWA) and the World Wide Wrestling Federation (WWWF)—became the most lucrative promotions outside of the NWA, and wound up giving them a real run for their money.

The '60s and '70s—Gagne and McMahon

By the end of the 1950s, most of the territories were hitting their stride. Many had settled into well-attended weekly or monthly shows, developed television deals, and cultivated the talent to draw fans to both. Those that failed at this quickly went out of business, only to be replaced by another upstart company. Business may have been down from earlier in the decade, when television was just beginning to become a household commodity, but it was still steady enough to keep most companies open. Getting a program with the NWA champ once a year was just fine for most promoters, but not all. While many were content with their place in the NWA pecking order, there were some who saw a bigger picture. By the end of the 1970s, wrestling was hotter than ever, and big changes were just around the corner.

In Minnesota, by 1959 the territory had come into the possession of their charismatic star, Verne Gagne. A no-nonsense hooker, Gagne had made a name for himself in the 1950s wrestling on national television. He was a household name and one of the most successful wrestlers working in the business at the time. After a series of controversial title change decisions made by the NWA board, Gagne was denied a title run he felt he deserved. In 1960, he officially left the NWA, founding the American Wrestling Association (AWA).

Some of the world's most famous wrestlers and personalities got their big breaks working for the AWA: Hulk Hogan, Jesse Ventura, Bobby Heenan, The Road Warriors, and Gene Okerlund, to name just a

few. At its peak, the AWA controlled nearly the entire Midwest (with its focus on the Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and Chicago territories), as well as areas stretching into Canada and as far west as San Francisco.

The Northeast territories, centered in New York, had naturally always been a hotbed of wrestling activity. Many years after leaving the Gold Dust Trio, Toots Mondt made his mark on the wrestling business once more. This time around, he partnered with the first in a long line of promoters from the family whose name became synonymous with the industry: The McMahons. Roderick James "Jess" McMahon was the first. He began promoting sporting events in the early 1900s in the New York area that included boxing, baseball, basketball, and of course, wrestling. Shortly after founding the Capitol Wrestling Corporation with Mondt in 1953 and joining the NWA as their Northeast territory, Jess McMahon died suddenly of a cerebral hemorrhage, leaving Capitol without a leader. Enter Vincent James McMahon. Under McMahon and Mondt, Capitol Wrestling became the premiere NWA territory, dominating the group's bookings.

After a falling out in 1963 over championship bookings, Mondt and McMahon left the NWA and formed the World Wide Wrestling Federation (WWWF). After a controversial loss to Lou Thesz for the NWA title, McMahon and Mondt named their top heel, "Nature Boy"

Buddy Rogers, as their first champion. The company had been formed so quickly that a WWWF Championship belt hadn't even been made yet. When Rogers was announced on TV as the new champ, he simply wore his old NWA U.S. Championship belt, a title he still technically held. It wasn't until a month or so later, when he dropped the title to Bruno Sammartino that a new belt was made specifically for the WWWF. Sammartino held the title for the next eight years, finally losing it to Ivan Koloff in 1971.

As the '70s drew to a close, wrestling was more profitable than ever. As the world grew smaller, however, the old models weren't going to work forever. The territory system, dating back to the 1920s, had worked largely unchanged for nearly sixty years, and many old-school promoters saw nothing wrong with it. It took a young, brash, third-generation promoter to change all of that forever.

Vince McMahon, Jr. and the Death of the Territories

The 1980s was a very big decade for professional wrestling. A lot happened in a relatively short amount of time. With the advent of cable television and pay-per-view, the decade saw one company rise to dominance, while the others all but died off. Many of the promoters, in truth, had only themselves to blame. Bad decisions and poor management are what, in the long run, put them out of business, but that's not what they would have you believe. To many of the old-timers, there was one and only cause of their demise: Vince McMahon Jr.

At the beginning of the '80s, the territories were still hot. The NWA, the AWA, WCCW (World Class Championship Wrestling, out of the Dallas area and home of the Von Erich family), CWF (Championship Wrestling from Florida, the Tampa territory that saw the early development of stars such as Dusty Rhodes, the Funks, and "Superstar" Billy Graham), CWA (Continental Wrestling Association, out of Memphis, which, in 1982 made national news by promoting the infamous Jerry Lawler versus Andy Kaufman feud), and countless others were all doing good business. They had hot feuds and TV



ratings were up. Most promotions were, by and large, respecting the territory system and the old way of doing things. Vince McMahon Jr. had other ideas.

When he bought the WWF (World Wrestling Federation, renamed from WWWF a few years earlier) from his ailing father in 1982, McMahon already had some success in promoting. He'd been working with his father in the business since the late 1960s, giving him an unprecedented education on how it all worked. Combining his knowledge of wrestling with extremely shrewd business acumen, he was eager to try some new ideas. McMahon gleaned early on that the days of the "technical" wrestler were coming to an end. While shooters and hookers were a once necessary piece of the puzzle to keep would-be rebels in line, those days were over. McMahon wanted flash and pizzazz, not headlocks and armbars. Less concerned with old school traditions like Kayfabe and "protecting the business" than the other promoters, McMahon broke as many of the old rules as he could and never once looked back.

In the early '80s, Verne Gagne's AWA was poised to become the top promotion in the country. Gagne had cultivated stars like Nick Bockwinkel, Bobby Heenan, the Hennigs (Larry "The Axe," and later his son, Curt), and most notably, Hulk Hogan. Fresh off an appearance in *Rocky III* (1982), Hogan was arguably the hottest wrestling star in the world. He was all set to become the AWA Heavyweight Champion, but Gagne had a catch. He wanted a share of Hogan's merchandise sales from his dates overseas and elsewhere. Gagne argued that he had "made" Hogan, and therefore deserved a cut. When Hogan refused, a rift formed and Gagne booked him to lose to Bockwinkel for the title. Already angry when McMahon came along with an offer, Hogan agreed to jump ship. By not compromising and coming to an agreement with Hogan, Verne Gagne all but sealed the fate of the AWA.

It didn't take long for others to start jumping ship. Interviewer and announcer Gene Okerlund was one of the first to go, giving the WWF one of its most beloved characters of all time, followed shortly by Jesse Ventura, Adrian Adonis, and many others. But it wasn't just

the AWA talent Vince had his eye on. In fact, he lured away top stars from nearly every promotion.

In need of a heel to face Hogan, McMahon contacted Roddy Piper, who was working for Jim Crockett Promotions out of Charlotte, N.C. at the time. It was a brilliant move that set the tone for the early days of McMahon's WWF. McMahon had an existing stable of legitimate stars, but the acquisitions from the other promotions, coupled with clever marketing, put the WWF on the road to becoming the top promotion in the world. There were notable early holdouts, like Ric Flair and Dusty Rhodes, but by the end of the decade, even they eventually caved to the money McMahon offered.

The talent raids were just the beginning of McMahon's takeover of the business. He saw no reason to limit his viewership to just his Northeast territory. In defiance of the old agreements, he simply expanded to other markets. He struck a deal with the fledgling USA Network and began running pre-taped shows that were seen nationally, violating rules of the long-standing territory system. At the time, Jim Crockett was McMahon's biggest competition, largely due to the rabid following of southern fans and the first of many yearly supercards known as Starcade. In November 1983, Jim Crockett held the first-ever Starcade card in Greensboro, N.C. The card featured the biggest names the NWA had at the time, with the main event being a World Championship title match between Ric Flair and Harley Race. Fans were rabid to see the sold-out show, so Crockett and company utilized a novel technology known as closed-circuit television (CCT) to capitalize further. Fans, in a limited number of cities across the South, bought tickets to see the show at a local movie theater, which broadcast it live via a closed circuit. On Thanksgiving night 1983, Starcade became the first wrestling show to be broadcast in this way, paving the way for wrestling's biggest money maker in years to come: pay-per-view.

Undeterred, McMahon fired back with a supercard of his own: WrestleMania. McMahon enlisted the help of MTV, Saturday Night Live, and celebrities from across the entertainment spectrum to

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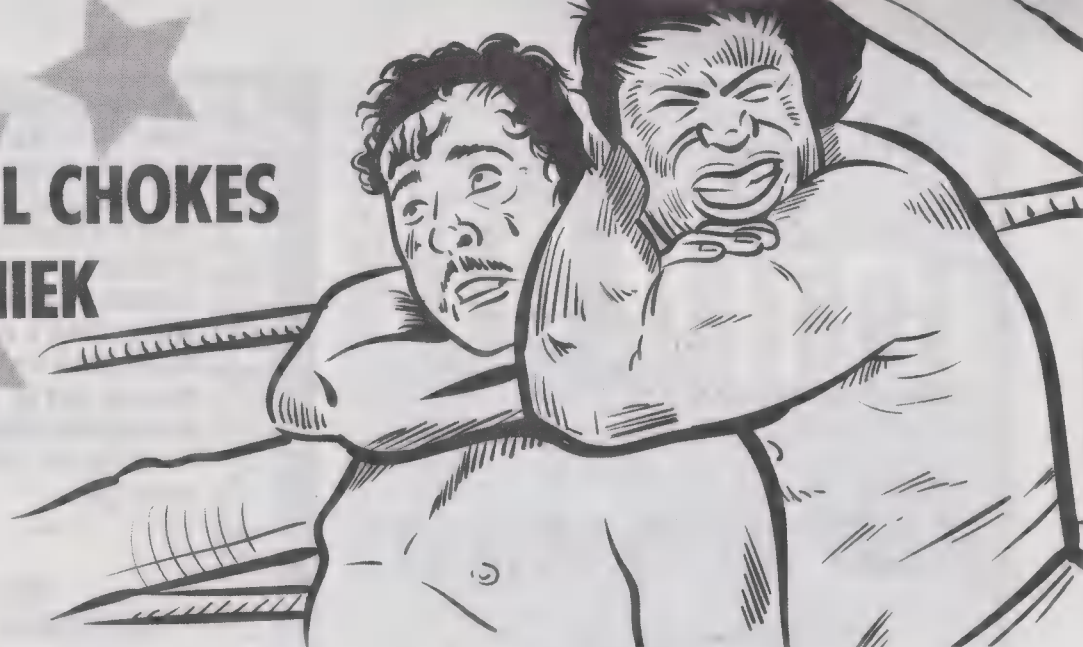
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BOBO BRAZIL CHOKES THE SHIEK



★★ Using the crowd's built-in prejudices was an extremely effective way to generate a draw.

promote his show. Mr. T, Cyndi Lauper, Liberace, Billy Martin, and Muhammad Ali were all on hand to help, giving the card ■ aura of "credibility." It was ■ huge gamble that many were certain would not pay off, but it did, and in ■ big way.

The main event was the culmination of months of press and storyline buildup, including Hulk Hogan legitimately injuring comedian Richard Belzer (he required eight stitches), Jimmy Snuka famously getting hit over the head with a coconut by Roddy Piper, and Captain Lou Albano appearing in the video for Cyndi Lauper's "Girls Just Want to Have Fun." This particular angle ushered in a revitalization of women's wrestling, another aspect of the business' history steeped in controversy.

The role of women in professional wrestling's history is predictably sexist. From either being relegated valet (ring escorts) roles, exploitive matches booked as mid-card fluff, or to the even more exploitive "bra and panties" era, women in wrestling have largely been simply used ■ eye candy or filler. Wrestling began as a sideshow attraction on the carnival circuit, but for women, it has mostly stayed that way.

Women in professional wrestling have always been just as tough as their male counterparts. Old-schoolers like Cora Livingston, Clara Mortenson, Mildred Burke, Jane Byers, and more famously Mae Young and the Fabulous Moolah, were capable of legitimately kicking the shit out of just about any promoter in town. Seeing the opportunity to exploit the lascivious nature of most twentieth century men, women's matches were generally billed as some sort of "cat fight" between two astutely accomplished grapplers.

The male fans were sleazy, but the promoters were worse. It was common for them to pressure women into sexual relationships in exchange for matches or bookings. They were even known to act as pimps, using the women to gain bookings or talent loans from rival territories. Many women flat-out refused this arrangement, taking their career into their own hands.

Mae Young, a tattooed cigar smoking gal from Oklahoma proved especially tough and especially hard to handle. The stories of her brawling with fans are many and amazing. Here's what fellow female wrestler, Elvira Snodgrass said of an incident in Little Rock back in 1945: "Young is ■ natural roughneck. This night in Little Rock she said something to a man fan and he kicked her in the face. Then Mae took him. His wife came to his assistance and Young sent

both of them to the hospital. The aftermath was a trip to the jailhouse for Mae and ■ fine."

In what apparently passed ■ ■ compliment in the 1940s, Ed "Strangler" Lewis had this to say about Mae Young:

"Women belong in the kitchen and not in the ring. I don't like women wrestling but if there ever was someone born to be ■ wrestler, you're it."

Along with friends and rivals, Mildred Burke and the Fabulous Moolah, Young helped spread women's wrestling during WWII, taking advantage of the absence of ■ many men. After the war, they toured the world, further legitimizing it in every town they hit.

Young held several women's championships until she finally retired from the spotlight for good in 2007, sixty-eight years after her debut. Moolah—whose original gimmick was "Slave Girl Moolah," valet to Buddy Rogers—is most noted for holding the NWA Women's title for the better part of twenty-eight years, and participating in the main event of—with fellow female wrestler, Wendi Richter—*The Brawl to End It All* on MTV. This match was integral to the WWF's *Rock 'n' Wrestling Connection*, and was well-received by the WWF's predominantly male audience, further helping legitimize women's wrestling. For ■ time, anyway.

For many, The Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling (GLOW), which made its debut in 1986, was ■ entry point to wrestling fandom. Featuring ■ myriad of racist stereotypes and skimpy outfits, the women of GLOW were not trained wrestlers, or even fans. They were actresses and models who, after being cast, were put through a half-assed training program and paid very little. Medical insurance wasn't provided so if they got hurt, it was on them. Some see the cheesy camp of GLOW as harmless entertainment, while others view it as pure exploitation.

The '90s ushered in more in-ring sexism. The addition of Jerry Lawler's overtly sexual commentary in the WWF, and ECW's habit of—as Tommy Dreamer puts it in the documentary *The Rise and Fall of ECW*—"women getting their butt kicked by men," are more low points in wrestling's struggles with the issue. Not ■ lot had been learned in decades past.

For all the WWF's "bra and panties" matches (you could practically hear Lawler pop ■ boner every time), they did have one truly great female talent: Chyna. As a member of the DX stable,

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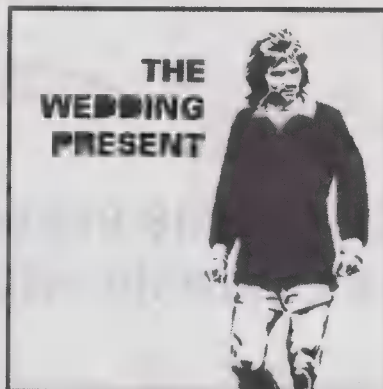
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HELEN HILD FLIPS FABULOUS MOOLAH

**Wrestling began as a sideshow attraction
on the carnival circuit, but for women,
it has mostly stayed that way.**

Chyna was part of one of the hottest cliques since the Four Horsemen. Her high-profile matches with top stars earned her a lot of respect from the locker room, if not from the announcers' table. She was a legitimate talent who deserves much respect.

The late '90s and early 2000s ushered in a new era for female wrestlers. Led by Lita and Trish Stratus, and with the additions of talent like Molly Holly and returning vets like Jacqueline and Ivory, the WWF's Women's Division found a new audience. It wouldn't take long, however, for the division to again become focused on looks over talent. Fitness models who were originally brought in as valets were dumped into the women's division simply because they were already under contract. With very little training, Torrie Wilson, Stacy Keibler, and others, including Stephanie McMahon (Vince's daughter) were suddenly top contenders for the belt. Many of these matches had far too gimmicked stipulations and were difficult to watch.

The division has been slowly improving since then. With the introduction and success of TNA's (Total Nonstop Action) Knockout Division in 2007 as its model, the WWE renamed their women's title to the Diva's Championship, a reference to how "high maintenance" women can be. The annoying nature of its name and its pink, girly belt aside, the level of female talent involved is among the best ever assembled. The fitness models are out. These ladies work. It's unclear if male fans are taking them as seriously as they should, but, hopefully, it's just a matter of time. In 2016, the Diva's Championship was retired, being replaced by the WWE Women's Championship, and the talent pool, with the help of WWE's developmental territory, NXT, continues to grow.

Let's not forget the valets. Female ring escorts go back at least as far as the Gold Dust Trio, but it wasn't until the '80s that they became stars in their own rights. Miss Elizabeth and Sherri Martel, for example, were two of the most recognized personalities in wrestling at one time. Sometimes simply eye candy, sometimes trained wrestlers, valets, like their male "manager" counterparts have always played an integral storytelling role. Whether it be a babyface helping their charge back to their feet by offering moral support, or a heel sneaking them a weapon from their purse, the valet helps generate heat in major

ways. Missy Hyatt, Sunny, Beulah, Francine, Marlena, Sable, Baby Doll, Trish, and Woman (yes, Woman) are all amazing talents who helped a lot of wrestlers get over. They deserve as much recognition as anyone. It's a tough business even if you're not an active ring participant. For proof, check out the 1997 ECW match between valet Beulah McGillicutty and manager Bill Alfonso. Holy shit.

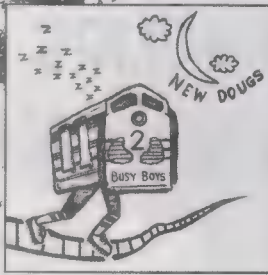
An age-old conundrum of women's wrestling is the empowerment vs. exploitation debate. It's difficult for me, as a male, to effectively weigh in, as the experiences and motivations of each female performer is personal and varied. Still, the debate rages nonetheless. On its surface, up until very recently anyway, the role of women in wrestling was intended by male promoters and many male fans to be largely exploitive. On the other hand, female wrestlers have the power to become positive influences on women and girls all over the world, regardless of how male audiences perceive them. There's an undeniable power in that.

What Moolah and Wendi Richter did in the mid-'80s was no doubt a large part of WWF's success. They were integral in helping usher in what came to be known as "The Rock and Wrestling Connection," a mixture of pro wrestling, music, and pop culture. McMahon was veering away from the traditional violent and often bloody matches happening elsewhere to focus on a more family-friendly approach. It was a novel way to do business and was wildly successful.

The other top promotions made attempts to also capitalize on this, but had little success. Through most of the '80s, the AWA, NWA, and WCCW were still doing decent business, with plenty of hot stars like the Von Erichs, The Fabulous Freebirds, The Rockers, Curt Hennig, Scott Hall, and the Nasty Boys, to name just a few, but they were struggling to keep up. It should be noted that almost all of these wrestlers would end up working for Vince McMahon by the end of the decade or the beginning of the next. It seemed that all Jim Crockett, Verne Gagne, and the other promoters were doing was grooming young talent to eventually leave for greener pastures. McMahon's strategies were paying off big time, and the old-school companies simply couldn't keep up. It wasn't long before they closed their doors or faded into near obscurity.

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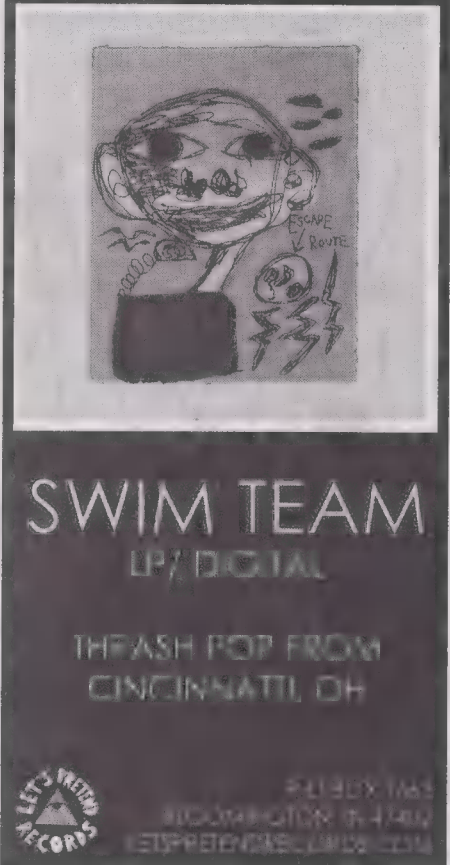


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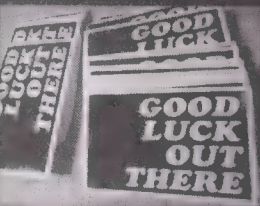
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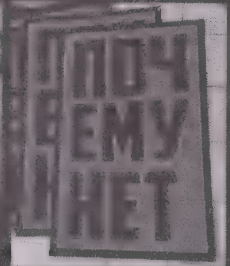
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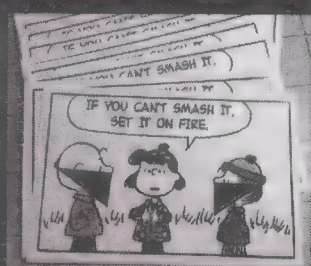
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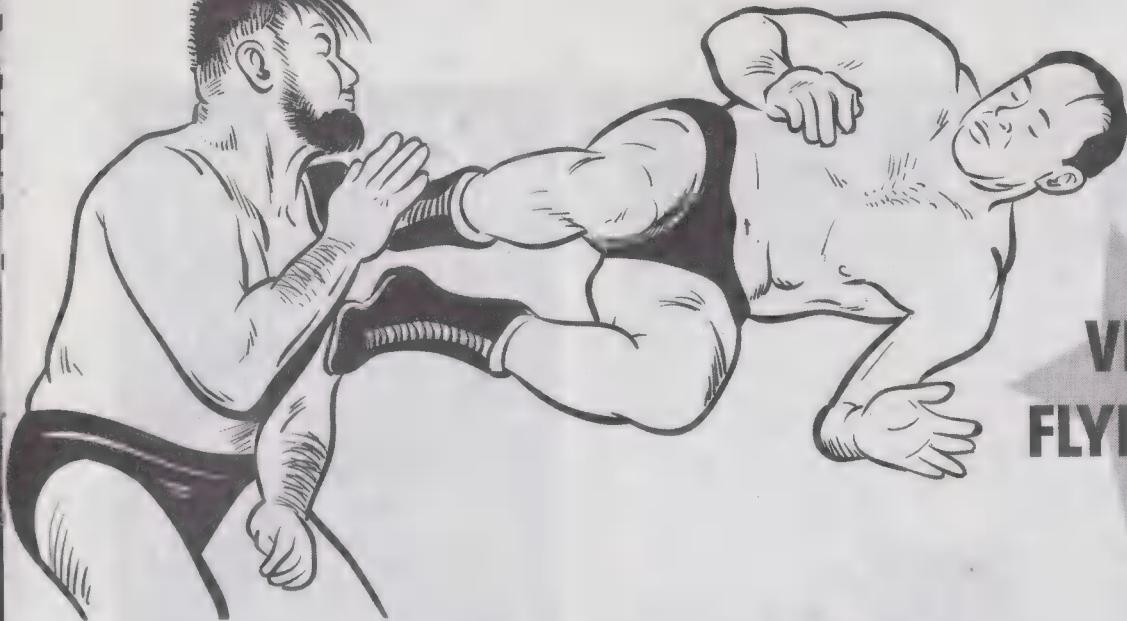
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VERNE GAGNE FLYING DROPKICK

The strangest thing about homophobia in the wrestling business is simply how homoerotic the whole thing really is.



The Monday Night Wars

Closed-circuit TV had given way to pay-per-view (PPV). Fans no longer had to go to a movie theater to see the big cards. They could buy them through their cable provider and watch from home. WrestleMania and Starcade continued as yearly events, drawing big numbers and PPV buys. More PPVs were added to the calendar year, quickly making them the most lucrative way for a wrestling promotion to make money. By 1989, the WWF was up to four annually, with more on the way. Even though Vince McMahon had all but monopolized the professional wrestling business and put the territory system out of commission, he still had a small amount of competition.

World Championship Wrestling (WCW) had its roots in the old territory system. In the mid-to-late '80s, Jim Crockett started buying up NWA territories in a national push to compete with Vince McMahon. These territories were placed under the banner of WCW. Crockett, however, was millions in debt and couldn't maintain the company any longer. Enter Ted Turner. After purchasing WCW from Crockett, Turner went to work rebuilding the company on a national level.

These early years were not particularly successful. WCW had established stars like Ric Flair, Dusty Rhodes (fresh off a run in WWF), and Ricky Steamboat (also fresh off a WWF run), as well as an impressive stable of up-and-comers like the Steiner Brothers, Lex Luger, and Sting. Their failure lay mostly in the bookings. They chose to go the gimmick route instead of showcasing the talent they had. This was the era of the "Dusty Finish," named for star and booker, Dusty Rhodes. These finishes were often ambiguous in nature, not having a clear winner, or having the results overturned through some sort of rules violation. Fans were not happy.

Ratings were poor, and the company was once again in trouble. By 1993, WCW had officially withdrawn from the NWA and had begun the process of figuring out just how to compete with the WWF. The answer came in the form of a former AWA announcer, Eric Bischoff.

Eric Bischoff rose in the ranks of WCW rather quickly. Turner liked him and quickly promoted him from announcer to, eventually, president of the company. Once in control, Bischoff began making moves that were straight out of Vince McMahon's playbook. By 1995, the company turned a profit for the first time since its purchase in 1991, and things were just getting started.

In 1996, Bischoff started his now-infamous talent raids. Much to Vince McMahon's dismay, it was his WWF that was being raided. Bischoff first lured away popular WWF star Scott Hall, followed quickly by Kevin Nash. Hall and Nash were branded as an invading force from WWF, and they sold it brilliantly. Fans thought Vince McMahon had planted enemy agents into WCW. Fittingly, they called themselves The Outsiders, paving the way for the most dominant wrestling presence of the 1990s.

Bischoff's raid of WWF continued with the acquisitions of Gene Okerlund, Randy Savage, and many others, but Hulk Hogan was his biggest prize. If there was anyone who could stop those dastardly Outsiders, it was Hogan. On July 7, 1996, at the Bash on the Beach PPV, Hogan came down the ramp to interfere in Randy Savage and Lex Luger's match against The Outsiders when the unthinkable happened. Hulk Hogan turned heel with a leg drop on Savage. The New World Order (NWO) was born.

The NWO became a "promotion within a promotion," recruiting wrestler after wrestler for their stable. Their goal, in an elaborate work, was to disrupt as much WCW programming as possible. They were a type of street gang whose sole purpose was chaos. No babyface was safe from the NWO. It was a ratings goldmine, but it wasn't the only factor in WCW's success.

At the same time WCW was beginning their NWO push, they began pushing their cruiserweight division bringing in talent from Mexico and Japan. Cruiserweights, sometimes called light heavyweights, are usually smaller in stature and engage in a much faster-paced style of wrestling than their heavyweight counterparts. Bischoff also began raiding another up-and-coming company based out of Philadelphia, ECW (Extreme Championship Wrestling). These cruiserweight matches were often opening to mid-card bouts, but the talent involved (Rey Mysterio Jr., Psicosis, Ultimo Dragon, Dean Malenko, Eddie Guerrero, et cetera) was astounding. ECW first brought these foreign stars to the U.S. and established the American ones. WCW simply offered them more money and promised them a national stage on which to continue their feuds. The result was some of the best matches of the decade.

WCW consistently beat WWF in ratings (WCW had Monday Nitro on TNT, and WWF had Raw Is War on USA, airing head to head on Monday nights). Vince McMahon's response was to change gears. Matches got more violent and the programming became very, very sleazy.



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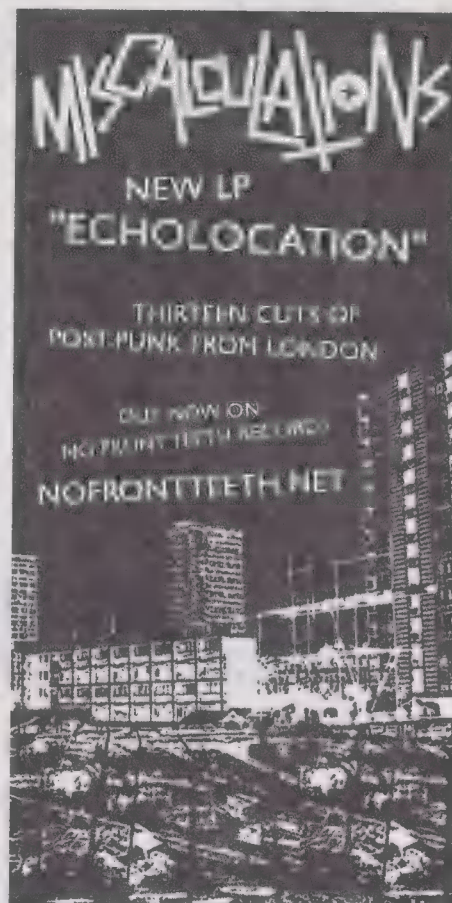
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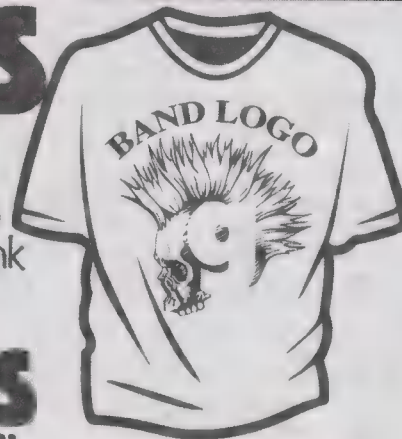
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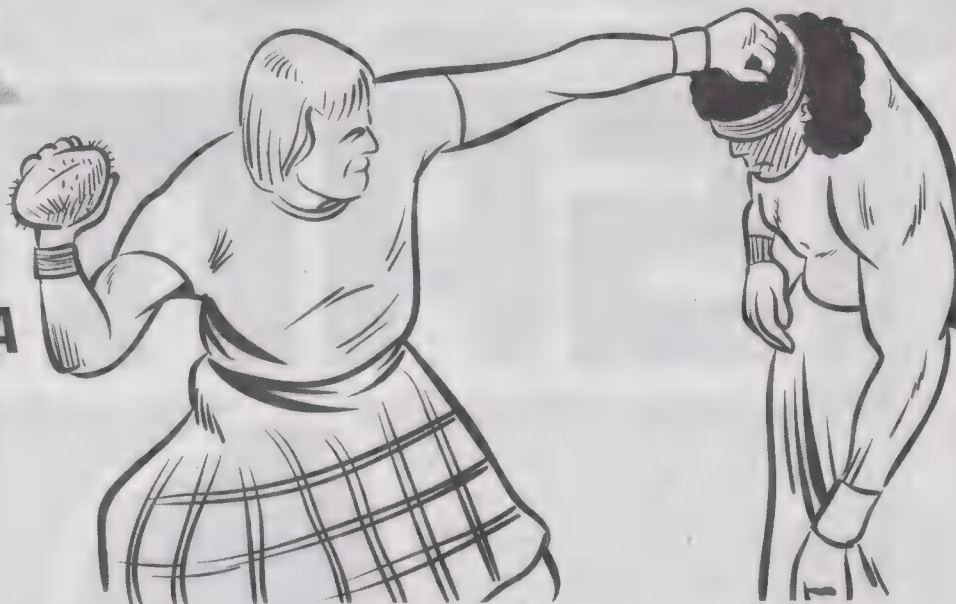
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RODDY PIPER HITS JIMMY SNUKA WITH A COCONUT



**Freely flowing blood was one of the ways to
maintain the legitimacy of the sport.**

★★★★★ **You had to keep up appearances.**

Led by veterans such as Shawn Michaels, The Undertaker, and up-and-coming talent Stone Cold Steve Austin, The Rock, and Mankind (among many others), this became known as the Attitude Era, a mixture of hyper-sexualized gimmicks and ever-increasing bloodshed (a page taken from both the company's history and the success of ECW). WCW battled back with the rise of, perhaps, their biggest star of the late '90s, Bill Goldberg, an unstoppable monster and fan favorite who refused to give in to the NWO's bullying. His winning streak lasted for years and further helped WCW's ratings reign.

The war was on and WCW seemed unstoppable for a time. However, too much of a good thing isn't always good for business. The NWO push outlived itself, becoming an increasingly convoluted storyline. The WWF also had simply developed a better roster and was telling much more compelling stories. Fans took notice.

WCW programming became the same thing every week: a match starts, the NWO interferes, repeat. Fans grew tired. Not even Goldberg could electrify them anymore. Meanwhile, the WWF was pushing exciting storylines featuring wrestlers that would go down in history. Steve Austin vs. Vince McMahon, The Rock 'n' Sock Connection, Hardys vs. Dudleys vs. Edge and Christian, the Hardcore Division, and the arrival of Kurt Angle were just a few elements that lit a fire for fans. In the span of just a few years, WCW went from being fresh and exciting to second-tier wrestling. With dwindling ratings, by the end, it became difficult to watch.

The details are complicated, but in short, poor backstage management and the WWF's successful cultivation of new and exciting talent destroyed WCW. Seemingly everyone—myself included—tuned in on March 26, 2001 to watch the last episode of WCW Monday Nitro. We thought we would be seeing a nice farewell. Instead, what we got was news the company was sold to the McMahons, with Vince and his son, Shane, appearing on the show. It was amazing—I remember realizing that, not only was I witnessing a historic moment in wrestling history, but that I was glad to see WCW go.

A few weeks later, ECW declared bankruptcy, effectively breaking my heart. ECW owner Paul Heyman and the owners of the AWA, WCCW, and more would later sell the remaining assets and video libraries to Vince McMahon. Most of the visual history of wrestling now belongs to one company.

And here we are.

Today, wrestling is enjoyed by millions of fans, and an ever-increasing amount of punks, all over the world. The U.S. is currently the largest market for professional wrestling, but Japan and Mexico have had their own highly successful—and highly regarded—promotions for decades as well. WWE's developmental territory, NXT (it's "minor league," if you will) has proven especially popular among punks and other fans of a more stripped-down product. Somehow, Vince McMahon has tapped into a market that doesn't care much for his "big" shows (Raw and SmackDown), but gets them to tune in to his "indie" show (which is anything but). It's a pretty slick deception, considering that NXT's roster is made up almost entirely of wrestlers who have legitimate independent backgrounds and who have succumbed to the same talent raids that McMahon used back in the early '80s to build his brand. Why mess with a good thing?

Is wrestling's popularity among punks and other "hip" groups a trend? It's difficult to say. I hope the punks stick around, anyway. The infusion of lefty politics, inclusiveness, and ever more progressive locker rooms and storylines can—I like to think anyway—be attributed, at least in part, to punk rock's growing influence on wrestling.


It's doubtful that Vince McMahon—who has a net worth of nearly 1.25 billion dollars—will embrace punk rock in any serious capacity any time soon, but the punk invasion of the indies will surely continue for quite some time. However, with McMahon's raids of independent promotions for talent, it's in the realm of possibility that, someday, there could be a full-on punk invasion of WWE. Wouldn't that be something?

I for one cannot wait to see what the future holds for DIY and independent pro wrestling. I'd like to be able to easily answer the question "Why do so many punks love wrestling?" but it's not that simple. Or maybe it is. Punks and wrestlers are both by nature steadfastly individualistic. They live the lives they choose with varying degrees of crazy, but mostly, they do just about everything on their own terms. Even if you have an asshole boss like Vince McMahon.

SAATCHI



PHOTO: [illegible]



Rapper, producer, and doctoral candidate at Cornell University, Enongu Lumumba Bakongo, known as Sammus, obliterates every box she is placed in. A native of Ithaca, NY, Sammus defies labels and transcends genres for her daring lyrics—at once personal and political—up to the bone to expose the marrow. Although she filters her words through a geeky perspective (her namesake is derived from an iconic Nintendo heroine, and she brandishes a replica of the character's arm cannon on stage), Sammus's lyrics remain potent and undiluted.

A few days after the interview, I saw her perform in Los Angeles at Junior High, a non-profit art space. Without a stage, supported only by her thumping beats, Sammus rapped fearlessly (and at one point, tearfully), becoming a force to be recognized. Her lyrics, although reflective of her own experiences, penetrated the soul of everyone who has felt left out, unrepresented, and marginalized. By deep diving into her personal life, she surfaces relatable themes buoyed by heartfelt emotions.

Unlike her videogame namesake, Sammus refuses to wear protective armor; she does not hide her true self because her vulnerability and honesty are the source of her power, charging her arm cannon aimed squarely at all the negative bullshit in the world.

**INTERVIEW INTRODUCTION AND
TRANSCRIPTION BY**
SEAN ARENAS

PHOTOS BY

SHELBY FUJIOKA AND MICK JACOBS

LAYOUT BY
DYLAN DAVIS

Sean: What sparked your relationship with rap?

Sammus: As a kid, I was exposed to rap through MTV, and in high school a friend who liked Talib Kweli and Mos Def shared music with me. At that stage, it sounded musically incredible, but I didn't feel like my perspective was worth showing in hip hop because most hip hop was hyper capitalist MTV stuff, or it was super heady and intellectual. There was no middle ground that I had found.

But when I was about to enter college, I first heard Kanye West, and that was a pivotal moment because I could see myself in hip hop. West was someone who bounced all over the place in terms of his perspective and his music, so towards the end of high school I started to have a more personal connection to hip hop.

Sean: What made you want to perform for the first time?

Sammus: Initially, when I started, I was just a music producer. I only wanted to make beats. I wasn't interested in attaching vocals. Six or seven years after I started making beats, I decided to rap. What pushed me to perform was that I was at a place in my life where I was unhappy. At the time, I was a third and fourth grade math and science teacher in Houston, Texas, and I was depressed about the educational system. I was not finding my tribe, in a sense. The people I eventually connected with were musicians and creative types, and being around this community who was consistently performing pushed me to want to try that myself.

Sean: Do you remember the first time you performed?

Sammus: I do. It was at this coffee shop called Bohemio's in Houston. My first performance is on my YouTube page. It's awful. So, so bad. I leave it up to remain humble [laughter]. It was nerve-wracking. I ran out of breath throughout the performance, and it was only a fifteen minute set. Afterwards, I felt such a rush even though

the performance was absolute garbage. It was still a really nice experience.

Sean: The rush makes it worth it. You rap a lot about videogames, cartoons, and things often seen as "nerdy" or "geeky." What began your relationship with nerd and geek culture?

Sammus: That predates my interest in making music. As a kid, I played a lot of videogames and my older brother was a big gamer. I especially connected with the music in videogames. For whatever reason, it produced something emotional in me. I started to have a desire to score videogames. The nerd references that are such a big part of my musical persona are the stuff I grew up listening and watching. That was my life, so I drew on that as a musician.

Sean: But what made you choose the Sammus moniker?

Sammus: That was a two-part process. When I started making beats, I would share those beats, and I would get weird pushback from dudes who'd be like, "Who made your beats?" And I'd have to be say, "It's me. I'm the one handling the production." Even after asserting myself, I'd still find people who'd say, "So, who really made your beats for you?" It was pretty gross stuff.

The name "Sammus" (spelled "Samus" in the videogame) comes from a game called Metroid. It's iconic for a lot of reasons, but the most notable is that the protagonist is in an armored suit, and you can't tell what they look like. But at the end of the game, the armor comes off and it's revealed that Samus is a woman. As a kid, that was such a cool moment, especially the way it was handled. The reveal wasn't a big production; it was a quick reveal then credits. At the time, I didn't know how to process the revelation.

I don't think I knew how deep of a connection I felt with Samus until I got older, until I had these weird interactions with these people who were questioning my prowess as a producer. And the other aspect is that I just love videogames and videogame culture. I didn't actually pick the name, though [laughter]. It was a friend of mine who explained that my anxiety and issues dealing with having to explain myself reminded them of Samus.

Sean: How did you respond to those assholes?

Sammus: When I first started pursuing music, I wasn't thinking about it in gendered terms. It was just, "I love to make music. This is how I express myself." At the time, I was like, "That's strange. I just said I'm the producer and this person is refuting my words." Or, not even refuting, but testing my knowledge, disingenuously asking me

questions to see if I knew what was "really" going on. My reaction has generally been to reassert that I am the person producing the beat. It still happens today, but usually it's met with the reiteration that I'm the producer and the rapper.

Sean: Have you felt any resistance in nerd culture as well?

Sammus: I was really anxious about taking on the moniker of Sammus because I was aware of how nerd spaces are often policed. I assumed the name prior to Gamergate (a term that encompasses events that incited discussions of sexism in videogame culture after female critics and game developers reported vicious harassment from male gamers), but I had already been in enough online spaces to know the toxic energy and masculinity that pervades these spaces.

Both being a woman and being a black woman, I was like, "Oh, I'm in for it. I'm going to hear all kinds of crazy shit." And, for the most part, I haven't received too much craziness. Nobody has directly done or said the type of things to me that other women and people of color have had to endure online. I feel blessed and lucky every single day.

For example, the song "Comments Disabled" (on *Pieces in Space*) is so me speaking on behalf of folks who deal with daily or monthly battles with folks online. The thought that "I have something I want to share, but I'm scared to log on and say it because I don't know who's going to try to harm me" is really, really distressing. I remember going to a convention a few years ago, and there was a bomb threat because one of the speakers was such a contentious figure for trolls on the internet, for pushing a critical perspective when talking about games. So, pushback is definitely ever-present, but nobody has ever done anything to me beyond being a dick online. [laughter]

Sean: Do you ever find yourself apprehensive about releasing a song for fear of reprisal?

Sammus: I often get pitted against other women by men. Men will often say, "Oh, I love your music because a) you don't talk about your body, or b) you don't twerk or whatever." These men think they're complimenting me by putting down other women and their forms of expression. That's something I actively resist against. I have to say, "You telling me that you love my music because I don't talk about my body is not a compliment. You're saying that a woman can only earn respect if she talks about certain topics."

I didn't even anticipate that I'd have to defend other women artists who choose to talk about sex or their bodies. That's the biggest anxiety I experience, that I'll be seen as hyper-intellectual and I won't be able to talk about sex or other topics that are important to me because I've been put in a box.

Sean: You once said in an interview that, for a long time, you didn't want to identify as a political musician but now you feel like your music is more personal and political. What changed?

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PHOTO by Mick Jacobs



Sammus: Often black artists, artists of color, women, or other marginalized people are tasked with being the symbol or the representation of an ideology. It becomes challenging to make a song about whatever because it'll often be interpreted as a political act. It's almost dehumanizing because you want to make a song about your day, but it's going to be interpreted as a statement about blackness or womanhood.

The way I resist this is by getting deeply, deeply personal. It cuts through the frameworks people lay on me, in terms of my identity, forcing them to engage with me as person. It's tricky because, on one hand, most artists want to be understood as people first. On the other hand, my blackness and my identity as a woman are very important to me, but I don't want these things to be the only thing—or the first thing—people see. The way I've been able to represent the wholeness of my experience is by getting so personal that you have to connect with me on some level.

Sean: Do you feel like the more personal your music becomes, the more Samus's protective armor falls apart?

Sammus: Initially, when I was walking the line between nerd-geek rapper and black girl navigating the world, I felt pressured to figure out what audience I was going to serve. I've realized, over the past few years, that those communities are one and the

same. There are so many people interested in black womanhood and videogames. It didn't have to be as fracturing as I thought it would be. Also, through performing at conventions and other "nerdy" spaces, I'll often perform tracks that have nothing to do with gaming, cartoons, or pop culture, and those are the songs that people will tell me resonate with them most.

I was unfairly and prematurely assuming that when I'm in front of a geek or nerd audience that I must only speak about geeky things—but that dehumanizes them. Of course, nerds deal with depression, body issues, ageism, or anything of the things I talk about in the rest of my music. These days, I'm much less stressed about what community I'm serving through my music because it crosscuts so many different groups. There's something any person can connect with.

Sean: "Perfect, Dark" seems to combine the areas you just mentioned: the personal and the political, nerd culture, and black culture. It's a song about the harmful effect the lack of representation of people of color in popular media has on young people—but the title is also a play on a classic N64 game.

Sammus: That song was important for me to make. Initially, I had written it around 2013 or 2014 because I was being invited into different nerd or geek spaces. My friend was putting together a mixtape of "nerdcore" songs, and I wanted to write

something that spoke about my experiences. Again, by being deeply personal, I could touch upon the universal feeling of being left out of the story.

Many people have come up to me and told me they have felt that way about the games, cartoons, or books they read as a kid. I wanted to speak about that because, as a kid, I had dreams of making my own videogame or cartoon, and I used to draw pictures of the characters but none of the characters looked like me. None of them had my hair, nose, eyes or lips. It forced me to step back for a moment. I was like, "Wow. I wrote myself out of my own imagination. Where is that coming from?" Then, I really thought about the things I consumed. Why would I have ever imagined myself in that universe if no one else had? So, that was the impetus for "Perfect, Dark." It's probably the best intersection of all the things that are me.

Sean: What is the songwriting process like?

Sammus: I used to start with the music because I'm a producer before I'm an MC. I use Logic as my digital audio workstation, but I'm now attempting to use Ableton. I start off with the production, and the music influences what kind of flow I can have. Listening to a beat over and over again dictates the cadence of the track, and that informs what I'm going to think about. These days, I can start writing words before I start the production. So, I'll

start thinking about ■ topic, write down clever ideas, develop that into verse, then craft the beat around that. That process is a lot harder than having the music first.

Sean: What provides lyrical inspiration?

Sammus: It's a combination of things. Sometimes a headline will speak to me. I'm on Twitter ■ lot, so I'm always getting news. With the track "Comments Disabled," I decided to write about online harassment after friends of mine tweeted about their experiences online. I read some of these stories and decided to write a song about it.

Other times, it's more personal. I cry a lot. I'm ■ huge crier. [laughter] Whenever I start to tear up, I'm usually like, "Okay. This is probably resource rich in terms of content. Why ■■■ I crying right now? Why is this commercial or song making me cry?" I write through it. Even when it's a headline or something that's not personally connected to me, I try to think about how I can speak about it from my experience and my relationship to it so it's not just ■ generic song.

Sean: With political punk bands, they often write songs without any personal reflection so it feels like a series of slogans. But where are these emotions coming from?

Sammus: Exactly. I understand the inclination of some folks to take ■ step back. There's a danger in talking about other people's struggles and positioning yourself within that. I totally understand an artist-or band being reluctant to put themselves in the center of ■ conversation. Personal testimonies—even if it doesn't paint the band in the best light—are the only way to create something deeply meaningful. Songs are stories. If your story is devoid of context or personal details, what's there?

Sean: In "Song about Sex," on *Pieces in Space*, you say, "To fuck you up a fuckboy need not be erect." What does that mean?

Sammus: It's ■ conversation about rape culture, and the fact that the act is one part of ■ much broader, complex issue that allows the act of rape. It's important that we focus on that horrifying moment and the horrifying power dynamic that allows someone to be taken advantage of in that way, but to also think about all the little interactions—the little moments—that culturally allow ■■■ to be so lenient and lax and to not believe in survivors when they come forward. That's what that line is about. In terms of being ■ fuckboy, that's somebody who is disrespectful of you in ■ sexual context, and their actions are tied to so many other relationships of power.

Sean: How did you deconstruct that in the song?

Sammus: To return to what we talked about earlier, I was initially writing ■ response to the ■■■ who "supported" my music by undermining other women. Like, "Hey, I like sex. Women like sex. Let's not police women's choices to talk about it." As I was writing the song, it started to change gears from being this awesome sex-positive anthem to talking about my personal experience.

As I thought about my personal experiences, I thought about relationships

and interactions that I have had that were fueled by sexual attraction and sexual energy, but were not healthy. I thought that was more interesting to explore. So, as I went down that wormhole, I drew upon experiences that were hurtful for me, moving from general fuckboys to my explicit interaction with a person who took advantage of me. I wanted to really cement in the listener's mind that this is something that can happen to anybody.

Sean: Was writing the song cathartic for you?

Sammus: In this case, it's still challenging for me. "Song about Sex" is a song I've never performed and probably will never perform. I have ■ track called "1080p" that's about mental health issues and going to therapy. That song is very cathartic when I perform it because it's ■ story about going from the deepest, darkest low and emerging from it. With "Song about Sex," even though I wanted it to be anthemic and empowering, there isn't a nice resolution. It's still a painful memory. And I think it has the potential to put the audience in a place where I don't know if I'm ready or they're ready to go. Maybe it'll be cathartic at some point, but I originally wrote it because I wanted to deliver an important message.

Sean: Your music isn't just slogans. It's personal and real. To touch base with your daily reality, you're pursuing a PhD. Are you ■ rapper pursuing ■ PhD, or ■ doctoral candidate pursuing rap?

Sammus: [laughter] It's totally switched. In this past year, it's become ■ rapper pursuing ■ PhD. Prior to that, I was definitely ■ doctoral candidate pursuing a rap career. In

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PHOTO by Shelby Fujioka

a monetary sense, I feel like I have more stability as ■ musician than I do as a PhD student—which is saying something about academia. Also, in terms of where my interests lie, it's more in music. I also feel there are things to be learned from having my foot in academia. Prior to this interview, I was working on my dissertation. I used to have a lot of crises about where I'm supposed to be, and now I'm much more confident in saying, "Once I get this piece of paper—this degree—I'm probably not going to look back at academia." I'm probably going to move one hundred percent into the art world.

Sean: What has academia given to you, positively or negatively?

Sammus: It's given me perspective about what matters and what doesn't. Many of the things that academics are pulling their hair out about on a daily basis, to me, are not the most critical things in the world. That's not ■ nice way to say that. [laughter] An example of that is when academics engage in turf battles—arguments about whether an area of research fits neatly into a discipline. In my field that means asking whether something is real or STS—smirk to self—smug. Or you'll find professors teaching classes about feminism or critical race theory but engaging in racist or sexist behavior in their personal lives. Pursuing ■ academic career has helped my writing as ■ artist because, even in academia, the stories that are the most interesting are the most personal ones, like



when people are talking about their research from a personal place.

Also, the nature of academia is that you think a lot. Exploring my thoughts and seeing where they go has been reinforced by academia, and—as an artist and writer—that has been helpful. It pushes me beyond just coming up with clever words. It's inspired my curiosity. In more concrete terms, I've been able to do cool things like perform or give talks at schools, which comes from being both a doctoral candidate and a producer/rapper. So, it's opened doors for me—but that's about it. [laughter] I'm pretty over the academy. I think it's cool for some folks, but it's totally not where I'm supposed to be.

Sean: What are you studying?

Sammus: I'm in the Department of Science and Technology Studies at Cornell University. In my field, folks study history, sociology, and anthropology as it relates to science, technology, and medicine. So, people are researching a huge spectrum of topics. Mine is sound studies, which is an intersection of different fields. When you look at sound studies through the lens of science and technology studies, it mostly examines the history of sound technology and how people come to understand sound in the twenty-first century. A lot of the things that produce, record, and reproduce sound are technology, which is why my field is uniquely linked to the studies of sound.

Sean: What was your original plan when entering the PhD program?

Sammus: I didn't actually plan all that well. [laughter] I like learning, I love reading, and a PhD program seems like a good place for someone who doesn't know exactly what they want to do, but they know that they like school and they're intellectually curious. My advisor was someone I had worked with in undergrad on a project about gender and digital audio workstations, but I don't think I did enough research about what the academy entailed.

I'm not good at academic politics and networking, which is something I didn't think about. Initially, all I wanted to do was go somewhere, learn cool stuff, and maybe write about it, but I became increasingly disenchanted with it as I moved forward.

Sean: Did you receive pushback from the academy for pursuing rap?

Sammus: I haven't. I feel very blessed about this. The chair of my committee is actually a musician and professor, so I lucked out in terms of being with someone who understands. For a long time, I didn't talk about my rap career. One day, I went into the copy room and an administrator had put an article about me on the table to show the department. I was mortified [laughter]. I snatched the paper and ran out of the room because I didn't want those two worlds colliding. But, since that, I've received only support from the department and my committee. I usually get questions like, "This is cute, but when are you going to finish your dissertation?" But it's never malicious.

Sean: I wrote in my *Razorcake* review for *Pieces in Space* that the song "Childhood" had a chorus that reminded me of Weezer.

Sammus: Yes! That's totally it. I listened to a lot of rock growing up, but it doesn't come out in my music as much as I'd like. I always try to find little places to throw in references and melodies that informed me as kid.

Sean: Did you have connections to punk or DIY while growing up?

Sammus: I sort of did. My older brother is a self-taught guitarist, and growing up in Ithaca, he was the front person for this band called Earl's Garage. He used to play shows in teen centers and basements, and I would go. It was the coolest experience. At the time, I didn't know what that was. I would just go and watch my brother do his thing. I didn't have the language to understand it. Looking back, I can recognize the awesome scene that developed around these high school bands.

After that, I would go to punk shows in the area, but I wasn't deeply involved in DIY communities until I returned to Ithaca after teaching in Houston. I was really, really distressed about being in a small town in upstate New York. Like, "Who's going to be my audience?" But the DIY scene in Ithaca most readily shared what I was doing. When I started performing in the area, I connected with Ithaca Underground, who have since become a non-profit. They put together radical all-ages shows. I'm super proud of pushing the organization to incorporate more hip hop because at the time it was punk and noise focused. So, I and a couple of artists have been able to open the spectrum of things that Ithaca Underground is invested in.

Sean: From your first show at Bohemio's to now, what has changed?

Sammus: You know, when I first started performing, one of my mentors said, "If you're not nervous before a show, something's wrong." I don't get nervous before shows anymore. [laughter] I feel great. I don't have nerves about shows because I know that this is what I'm supposed to be doing. There is a clarity. I might have a little bit of anxiety but not on the level of when I first started, where I would have crippling nightmares of falling on face. I'm confident that this is what I'm supposed to be doing. What's the worst thing that can happen?



Phrang

PHOTO BY MICHAEL OCHOA



PHOTO BY MICHAEL OCHOA



PHOTO BY GERARDO VELAZQUEZ, COURTESY OF LOS ANGELES ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW BY TODD TAYLOR AND ALICE BAG
PHOTOS BY LOUIS JACINTO • MICHAEL OCHOA • GERARDO VELAZQUEZ + LAYOUT BY JESSEE ZEROXED

Phranc, an out lesbian since the mid-'70s, is a first wave L.A. punker. She's been here since nearly the beginning and was in the epicenter of amazing music. She showed up and looked cool, which led to her playing in three bands: the marvelous, electro-caustic, and boundary-ignoring Nervous Gender; the wry, biting Catholic Discipline, featuring *Slash* editor Claude Bessy, Craig Lee of The Bags, and Robert Lopez of the Zeros; and the all-female, tough-as-hell, dagger-through-the-heart proto goth punk band Castration Squad. She's also on film in *Decline of Western Civilization*.

Phranc, as a punk, went folk in the early '80s. Her solo debut, *Folksinger* was released in 1985, and featured "Take off Your Swastika." She toured the world both as The Smiths' and Morrissey's opening act and recorded five solo full lengths.

That's her music bio, but that's only part of her story. Phranc's life involves a stint as a lesbian separatist, drug addiction, a painfully close death, and a horrific dog bite. It's also a journey that includes surfing, lifeguarding, competitive badminton, selling the shit out of Tupperware, an ambition to being a cake decorator, and being a renowned visual artist working in cardboard while bagging groceries at Ralphs.

Far from bitter and cynical at sixty, she's a living, breathing, humane reminder of what a broad span of creativity can look like. She is also really fucking nice. To be able to sit down with her and Alice Bag to get a more detailed picture of her life so far, was an extreme pleasure.

NO. I'M AN OFFICIAL HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT. DROPPED OUT TO BE A LESBIAN. I COULDN'T DO BOTH... A POLITICALLY ACTIVE LESBIAN.

Phranc: Phranc with a "ph" and a hard "c." Your basic, average all-American Jewish lesbian folk singer.

Todd: So, Phranc, you grew up in the beach community of Mar Vista.

Phranc: Yes, I did. The slopes of Mar Vista Elementary were the home of skateboarding. Nathan Pratt and Stacy Peralta were in my class.

Todd: What did your parents do?

Phranc: My mother's a dental hygienist and my father was a salesman.

Todd: Were you close to them?

Phranc: I had the classic mother, father, dog, brother. I wouldn't say I was close to them. I was adopted at birth and so was my brother. I never talk about that. I knew I was adopted from as early as they could tell me. I always felt really proud of it, 'cause it made me

special. At least that's the way they presented it to me.

I wasn't really close to them, but when I was growing up, my mom signed me up through Parks and Recreation to learn how to swim, play tennis. I'd say I had an idyllic childhood, but inside I was completely tortured because I knew I was a lesbian from when I was in kindergarten.

We've got the home movies. My whole life is documented in these home movies: first day of school, walking to the corner with my brother, with our lunchboxes, turning around, waving, and then walking across the street to school.

Todd: The quote I have is, "I knew I was a dyke when I was in kindergarten." How did you know that? It's such a strong feeling, being so young.

Phranc: I just had crushes on all the girls and the parakeets. [laughter] I've loved women and birds my whole life. That's my story. You know what you like from the beginning. It kind of went on like that until I was about sixteen and a half. At that time I was going to Venice High—crawling out the window at night. Doing fun things.

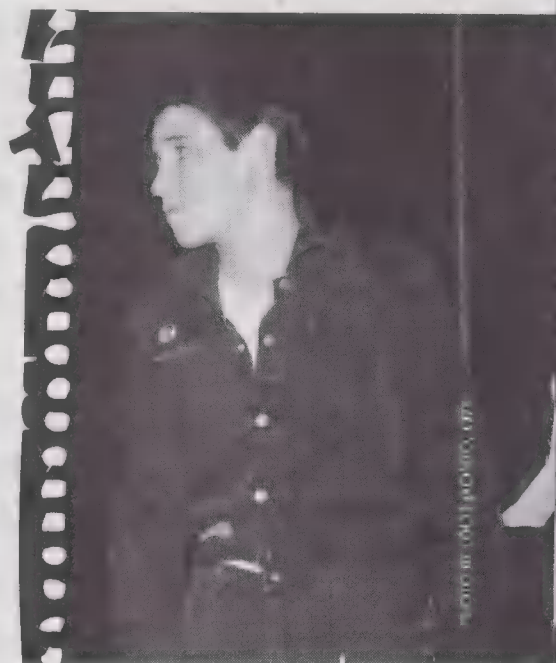
Alice: Like what, Phranc?

Phranc: Meeting people who could pick me up in their cars and take me back to their place. Going out to clubs. It was fun. And then right before I turned seventeen, I came out. When I was sixteen and a half/seventeen, I told my mom I was going to the library and I rode my bike to the Hill Street Women's Center in Venice.

Todd: What years are we talking about?

Phranc: I was born in 1957, so I just turned

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sixty. I came out between 1974 and 1975. I had been at Canter's (Deli). I went across the street and I'd seen *The Lesbian Tide* on the newsstand. It was this iconic news magazine that came out of Venice that was put together by Jeanne Córdova. She was the editor and she came from *The Los Angeles Free Press*. On the back of it, they listed this drop-in rap at The Women's Center. The Women's Center was just a little house. *Sister Magazine*—which was a kind of a lot like *Razormake*—it was the feminist version from the early '70s, met there. The Fat Underground met there, so there was fat-consciousness.

Everyone was ten years older than me. I sat there. I was just hanging out. And they were like, “Well, why are you here?” And I said, “Well, I really like chicks.” [laughter] And they all started peeping. “Peep, peep, peep, peep.” I was like, “What?” First of all, I'm so uncomfortable. It's weird. I'm at this gay place and I'm so excited, and yet they just kept peeping. Finally somebody said, “Women are not chicks. Chicks go ‘peep, peep, peep.’” That was my first consciousness-raising lesson.

So then, from getting to know women in the community, I went to Lesbian Dance at The Woman's Building, which at the time was near MacArthur Park. It was on Grandview. It was in the old Chouinard art school (now Cal Arts). “This place is so cool. There's art.” Sisterhood bookstore was there. There was a coffeehouse where I could play my guitar. There's an art gallery. They had a women's writers' conference. Then I found out they had this school there called The Feminist Studio Workshop, which was started by Judy Chicago, Sheila de Bretteville, and Arlene Raven. It came out of CalArts and it was starting there. I just thought that was so cool, so I made myself the mascot of The Woman's Building. I had moved out of my parents' house already. I was living with somebody in Venice.

Todd: Did you drop out of high school also?

Phranc: Yeah, I dropped out right before the second semester of eleventh grade. I played my guitar on the lawn at lunchtime and I raised a little hell, but there was nothing there for me. I went to a bunch of different high schools. I ended up at Venice and then I was in Venice continuation. I think I had to turn in a paper and I didn't turn it in, so I didn't graduate. I took half of the GED and I never finished that, either. I just moved along and got busy. It's only now that—my youngest daughter's getting ready to go to college and the counselor's telling her that she's first generation [laughter]. [In deeper, slower voice] “I didn't go to college.”

Todd: Did you ever get your GED?

Phranc: No. I'm an official high school dropout. Dropped out to be a lesbian. I couldn't do both. [laughter]

Todd: Single focus.

Phranc: I was a politically active lesbian. I was busy. I was working on *The Lesbian Tide*. My hair was way down my back. I cut my hair to the shoulders to go to the Lesbian History Exploration, which was a weekend retreat up in the hills of Malibu, at Camp JCA. There were writers and musicians and poets. It was all women and when I was there, I heard Alix Dobkin sing, the Jewish lesbian folk singer. I saw Liza Cowan, her girlfriend at the time, showed this slide show: “What the well dressed dyke will wear.” And she shaved her head, just buzzed it. It was really cool. So when I came home, all I wanted to do was cut my hair. And I changed my name when I was up there, to Franc.

Alice: Why?

Phranc: I don't know. I was on top of a mountain in Malibu with some dykes and I decided—because my name was Sue, and I got all the “Boy Named Sue” stuff. I'm not a Suzie. I'm just not.

Todd: Didn't you say it sounded like “a cucumber”?

Phranc: Oh, beans and franks. Frank. So I really liked the name Franc. I had found out from a friend that there was this really great barber named Bootsy and she was working at Dante's Barbershop, which was next to the Vons on Bundy and Santa Monica. So I took the bus right to Bootsy and she buzzed my hair off. I went to show my friend Punkin my new haircut. I knocked on her door and I said, “I'm Franc.” And she said, “Okay, hang on.” She came back with a blue baseball hat with a “P” on it and she put the hat on my head. That's how I got my “Ph.” That's how I became Phranc.

Todd: Fast-forward just a little bit. You went up to San Francisco, found punk. Come back to Los Angeles and you're one of the bridges between the lesbian community and punk rock.

Phranc: I think at that point in time—that's why I was so excited when queercore came along—I've been waiting my whole life to have the worlds merge. At that time, I think I was the only one who could see how much we had in common. The two subcultures would just not meet.

Todd: What did they have in common?

Phranc: Society hated us both. We were both very political, very vocal, very articulate. Activists. Artistic. Angry. We were all fighting the same people. The right was against both of us. Society was really close-minded to feminism. The angry women and the angry punk rockers; they overlapped just a very, very little bit.

Todd: Did you make efforts to connect the two?

Phranc: Well, Nervous Gender got to play this benefit at The Woman's Building, but we really weren't their cup of tea. They pulled the plug. You couldn't get more different, really.

Todd: Let's talk about the rigorous résumé process it took to get into Nervous Gender.

Phranc: [facetiously] They made me play all these different instruments. [laughs] It was Edward Stapleton who came up to me. I think it was at Baces Hall. The Avengers and Mutants were playing. He asked me if I wanted to be in ■ band.

Todd: Because you just looked cool.

Phranc: I didn't know ■ soul because the only people I knew in L.A. were lesbians. I was just going out. I put on a little suit and tie. But I wanted to be in ■ band.

Alice: I met you at the Canterbury (Apartments).

Phranc: I came to check it out. So, they asked me if I wanted to be in a band and I said, "Yeah." And they said it was Nervous Gender. That was it. I didn't even know what kind of band it was. It was pretty amazing. They were pretty amazing.

Alice: What made you want to be in a band with them? Did he look cool?

Phranc: Edward was pretty cool. I didn't meet Gerardo that night. They were three pretty remarkable men, but I had recently come from a stint ■ a lesbian separatist. It kind of works—Nervous Gender, lesbian separatism. The two just blend.

Todd: This is ■ direct quote. You said, "Nervous Gender was an incredibly misogynistic band."

Phranc: Well, the lyrics were pretty misogynist. They didn't hate women. They just championed other things. It was not really ■ feminist band. It had other ideas. It was motivated by another engine.

Todd: What would that engine be?

Phranc: It was queerer than just about anything.

Todd: And, sonically, very abrasive.

Phranc: Sonically, really different from any music I had ever listened to, ever. I didn't even know what a synthesizer was. Going back and listening to things now, the genius was Gerardo. He's highly conceptual, the way he thought of every song and the stories that he told. But I can't say that I really understood it then.

Alice: I just wanted to ask, but you're saying they were misogynist.

Phranc: The lyrics.

Alice: Like what?

Phranc: The song "Fat Cow." "It started with me waking to ■ whining wench / Sharpening

your witch fangs as the days grew intolerable / If what we were was living then I'm glad you're dead / Fat cow / Moo-Moo / Four tits / Cow hips."

Alice: Sounds like someone didn't like their mommy. [laughs]

Phranc: It's queer, but it's male queer stuff. It's kind of like Tom of Finland of the punk rock time. Very homoerotic.

I had ■ really good time in the band. It's not like I didn't have fun. It's not like I was being an uppity feminist. ■ was going right along with it. I was taping myself up. We put our outfits together. We went on stage and had a pretty great time.

Alice: I don't think there's anything mutually exclusive with Tom of Finland...

Todd: I can see Nervous Gender as male-aggressive. I'm thinking of Limp Wrist, too. One of the things I think has been advanced in punk rock in 2017 is this open embracing of gay culture by punks who are just saying, "Bring it." That's great. It's a massive part of the conversation.

Phranc: I think it's incredible. It just wasn't there yet, then. But, yeah, Limp Wrist and Nervous Gender would be on the same bill. They still could be because Nervous Gender's still together and I'm dying to see Limp Wrist because they sound amazing to me.

Todd: How long were you in Nervous Gender?

Phranc: For about ■ year. I was in Nervous Gender, Catholic Discipline, and Castration Squad all at the same time and then I left ■ and just was Phranc.

Alice: I always think of Castration Squad as an eighties band.

Phranc: Well, maybe. '79-'80. '81 I was solo. That makes sense.

Todd: Catholic Discipline, a lot of people know of them because they're featured in *Decline of Western Civilization*. I ■ there when they screened it at the Grrrls on Film festival. After Penelope Spheeris showed the film at Loyola, she asked for you and you weren't there.

Phranc: Oh.

Todd: Later, in the panel, you said that your daughter was so upset that you took her out. I personally hadn't seen *Decline* for ten or fifteen years, and it was shocking.

Phranc: It's really surprising, wasn't it?



Todd: Again, I think times have changed fundamentally. I understand that punk wants to push people's buttons, but, at the same time, we're trying to have humanity towards one another. There's ■ lot of that missing in *Decline*, looking back. You can say the people ■■ joking, but it's so pervasive. When I think of misogyny, it comes out of that movie layer after layer after layer.

Phranc: Yes, I agree.

Todd: What you said on the panel—your daughter said, "Yeah, mom, you told me about people being mean, going after you, but I had no idea it was like this." Seeing the actual footage of it.

Phranc: I was surprised. I just thought I was just taking her to see the good old days. I really did. They knew that I was in bands and stuff. This punk rock movie, this documentary.

Alice: Did you go to the opening of the film? Did you like it back then?

Phranc: I remember seeing it, but how many years ago was that?

Alice: I walked out of the premiere. I just remembered, "I can't take this. It's not the scene that I remembered. It's not how I wanted to be presented."

Phranc: Did you tell Penelope that after you saw the film?

Alice: I didn't see her. ■ just left.

Phranc: I just really didn't remember it at all.

Todd: For people, myself included, who didn't grow up as first-wave L.A. punks—I'm ■ little younger than you guys are—*Decline* was one of my first exposures to Los Angeles punk visually, and not just photos.

Phranc: It's interesting because people would say, "Oh, I saw you in *Decline*." I'd be like, "Ehhh, uhh." I didn't really think about it. I don't have ■ copy of it. I never watched it. I have the album. I think I listened to it once



or twice, just to see, "What's that Catholic Discipline song again?" It was the only place you could listen to The Bags. So, that's it. It wasn't until they screened it. I wished I'd seen Penelope because I love Penelope. She's terrific.

It was really interesting to be there. I was getting upset, but my daughter was really upset and I understand. It was upsetting to watch it. [To Alice] How many women have come up to you and said they've seen *Decline*?

Alice: A lot of people have seen it, even if we don't think it represented the original scene—it doesn't, obviously—but I think it's had a lasting effect for a lot of people all over the country. It's their first introduction.

Todd: There wasn't a lot of punk rock being filmed during that time. The only thing I can think of is Target Video. *Decline* went far and wide.

Phranc: *Decline* was a feature film.

Todd: True.

Alice: I saw that it was on Turner Classic Movies recently.

Phranc: Do you get a royalty from that?

Alice: No. The thing is for me, for some people it was important—it was meaningful to see us.

Phranc: People say it was. It was the only footage they ever see of you. You don't get to talk, but they see you. And they see me, even though all I'm doing is I play guitar in Catholic Discipline and they make me yell at the beginning. That's it.

Alice: But beyond that, a Chicana somewhere saw a Chicana on stage.

Phranc: Or a young lesbian saw me a butch lesbian on stage, yeah. And it made an impression.

Alice: And it made it a possibility for them to be there and also feel like, "Hey, we were represented."

Phranc: So that's the positive of that.

Todd: The third band is Castration Squad. That's the first band you and Alice played together in?

Both: Yes.

Phranc: What were you playing, Alice? Keyboards?

Alice: I started on bass because I was only a "temporary" bassist. I kept on saying, "I just gonna do one show." When I left the band, Tiffany took over bass and kicked me down to keyboards.

Todd: Castration Squad—red armbands?

Phranc: There's a picture of me with a red armband, with a black, bleeding heart with blood, that said CS with a dagger through it.

Alice: Castration Squad started off on a night when Shannon had had a fight with her boyfriend—and Patricia Morrison was also at the Canterbury at that time—had also had a fight with her boyfriend. So it started off with them badmouthing these guys who had done them wrong, hence the broken heart and the dagger. The castration is part of the anger.

Phranc: Then there was a newspaper article that came out that either Shannon or Tiffany had read, and it was about this castration squad. There was a vigilante group of women to take care of these rapists that weren't served

justice. When the rapists weren't convicted and let go, this group of women would track them down. One of them was a doctor. They would find him, kidnap him, anesthetize him, castrate him—he was okay, just had his balls cut off—and then leave him.

Alice: The name came about through Shannon and Patricia.

Phranc: I didn't know that Patricia was part of it.

Alice: Patricia was supposed to be the original bassist, but she had a lot on her plate, so I think she backed down. I don't know if she ever played any shows with them. Before we move on from Castration Squad, Shannon always made a point of saying that the

castration was not because we hated men and it wasn't supposed to be a literal castration. It was a castration of the patriarchy.

Phranc: It was not about hating men, never. But it was a catchy name.

Todd: After that, you've been a solo singer-songwriter for...?

Phranc: Since '81.

Todd: Do you think you were the first punk who decided, explicitly, to go folk?

Phranc: I don't know. I know that we did a show. Rick Van Santen and I produced a show. We had hoot night at the Whisky. That was before "MTV Unplugged," before any of that. I just loved the whole hootenanny concept and I thought how great to hear

NERVOUS GENDER, LESBIAN SEPARATISM. THE TWO JUST BLEND.





PHOTO BY JIMMY VELAZQUEZ, 1981 • COURTESY OF NERVOUS GENDER ARCHIVES

all the words and invite all these bands to play acoustic. So, the Circle Jerks played, "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." Top Jimmy played. John and Exene did "Jackson," and it was the beginning of The Knitters. Weavers—The Knitters. Tito from the Plugz played. Jeffrey Lee Pierce, Ella & The Blacks.

Alice: I don't remember that at all.

Todd: So in 1979/'80, you wrote "Take off Your Swastika"?

Phranc: I played it. I didn't record it until my first album in 1985. A lot of those songs were written and I'd been playing them for a couple of years before I got to make a record.

Todd: There's an interesting Dutch documentary that features you.

Phranc: Isn't that a trip? That's the thing people see the most. I got shot at a gig at Santa Monica College playing on the lawn and I did the song "Take off Your Swastika." There was this documentary team there and they filmed it. That's the clip that everybody sees. I wrote it as a reaction of when I was living in Hollywood and the people who would wear swastikas to clubs. The little skinhead bands. The Fear junkies who would show up with their little patches or armbands. Just to piss people off.

Todd: So, 1985, your debut comes out, *Folksinger*. How did you finance it?

Phranc: I saved money from teaching, swimming, and lifeguarding. I had tried to clean up my act. I was living on Normal Avenue in Hollywood, right across from

LACC (Los Angeles Community College). I was playing, but I wasn't in the best physical shape. Pretty strung out. I moved back to the west side of town.

Todd: Strung out, drug-wise?

Phranc: Yeah.

Alice: Really? I didn't know that.

Phranc: I was pretty out of it. I decided that I was going to get healthy. This doctor told me I was going to die. I had hepatitis, really sick. So he said, "You have to stop drinking. You have to start eating." I weighed nothing. And he said, "You have to start exercising." I'm such an extremist. I was so scared that I was going to die, I went across the street to LACC and I found the best-looking gym teacher. I just signed up for every single class she taught.

I took a swimming class. I was on the badminton team. Tennis. Weight lifting. I went from being a junkie to being a jock really fast. [chuckles] I moved to Santa Monica because they were supposed to be the best badminton team and they had a lesbian coach. When I got to Santa Monica College, they had just eliminated the badminton team. So, I went out for the swim team and that changed my life. Had the greatest swim coach. The two years I was on the swim team, I got it together.

At that same time, Craig Lee of The Bags—my little angel—and Ethan James—who had Radio Tokyo studios in Venice, a lot of great stuff was recorded there—they said, "Let's make your record." They literally took

me by the hand and took me to the studio. I had already written all the songs. I didn't know anything except I knew how I wanted the record to sound. But I had no experience recording. I wanted it to sound like Bob Dylan's first record: just guitars and vocals with nothing else. I didn't know how to get it, but they knew what I wanted.

Frank Gargani took the picture. I knew what I wanted the cover to look like, this Johnny Crawford—from the TV show *The Rifleman*—album.

Alice: Oh my god. Awesome.

Phranc: Teen idol. He had this album, *Rumors*. He's just beautiful and he's singing into this old microphone. I told Frank, "I want it to look like this." I always like to make the cover first, 'cause then I better make something really good to go inside. [laughter] It cost twelve hundred dollars. Gary Stewart said he wanted to put it out. Rhino only did re-issues. They didn't put out very many new releases. I think they had Wild Man Fischer and Phranc. They just jumped on this record. They worked really hard. The minute it came out, I got to do a little touring. Before I knew it, they released it on Stiff in the U.K. and I got to go and tour with The Pogues. All of a sudden, I was off to the races.

Todd: No offense, I can't imagine the Pogues audience being terribly receptive.

Phranc: We're in Paris, France. This big hall. The Pogues audience, they do some drinking, just to get themselves ready for the show. [jokingly] The thing they really want to see before the Pogues come on is this Jewish lesbian folk singer. [laughs] This person they can't figure out what it is. And there I was. They were so drunk and they started throwing shit at me. They were throwing coins and trying to get them into the sound hole of my guitar.

I don't leave the stage until I'm done playing. Doesn't matter where I play or who I'm playing for, you can't get me to finish until I'm finished. So I just kept playing and they kept throwing shit. You could hear the coins bouncing off the front of my guitar. And then they started lighting stuff on fire and trying to get it into my guitar. I finished my show. I did it.

Todd: You toured with Hüsker Dü?

Phranc: I didn't tour with Hüsker Dü. I just played with them. I toured with the Violent Femmes a little bit, a West Coast tour. I toured with Morrissey twice, and with the Smiths.

Todd: Were there times of overwhelming beauty?

Phranc: A lot of it was really amazing. That Pogues story, I have a handful of stories I can tell you that aren't positive. Most of the time, it was really great. Being an opening act is a task of its own. It's early. People aren't there yet. Most of the people don't care. Some people are listening. A lot of people aren't. Now, all these years later, I have people come up and say, "Wow, when I was fifteen at the Morrissey show, you were the first lesbian I ever saw on stage." 'Cause now, I just feel like, "Just doing my job."



Then—I love playing. I had a good time on all those shows, but it's weird. It's one thing to tour with a band, but I've only toured by myself. You can have the greatest night and then you go back to your hotel room and you're like, "Oh, okay. That was great." Or, "That was hard." Looking back, a little bit lonely, but satisfying in a way. I had done it. I've almost broken up with myself many times.

Todd: You've mentioned, also, surfing, which is another solitary activity.

Phranc: I love surfing. I try to surf as much as I can.

Todd: Is it part of your creative process?

Phranc: Sometimes in the water, but most of my creative process is driving to go surfing. I don't know why, but when I drive up the coast and I drive back—I've written almost all my songs.

Todd: I thought it'd be from...

Phranc: Sitting in the water.

Todd: Yeah, waiting for a wave. Contemplating.

Phranc: Maybe. Mainly driving.

Todd: To this day. That's awesome.

Phranc: Surfing's great.

Todd: So after awhile, you stopped playing music and you become what?

Phranc: The Cardboard Cobbler. Well, what happened was, I was on the tour with Morrissey and we were playing in Boston, Great Woods. This was a world tour. All the U.K., Europe, all the U.S., Japan, Australia, then back. We were in Boston. Two days later, we were supposed to play Madison Square Garden. I got a call when I was doing a radio interview, literally on the air. My dad called and told me that my brother had been murdered.

Todd: Oh, no.

Phranc: I remember my tour manager racing me to the airport, almost getting hit by a train, and I came home. Morrissey kept trying to get me back on the road. They asked me over and over. And I just couldn't and wouldn't at that time. The last time I'd seen my brother was in San Diego when Morrissey played there. Then he was gone. It was weird. He was killed on July 2. Fourth of July is my parent's anniversary. I just came home; need to bury my brother. He lived in San Diego. I had to clear out his apartment.

I didn't want to be in front of anybody. I didn't want to sing. I didn't want to perform. It took me about twenty-five years to realize that I was the only one who ended my career, because I never went back.

I went back to performing, but I never went back to that level of performing. What I did is I started making my visual art again, which I had been making back in the punk rock days. I'd always worked with cardboard because cardboard was free. It was in the alley. Still, you can get great cardboard. I was at the 18th Street Arts Center in Santa Monica. People there gave me a studio to work out of and I just started making my visual art. It's funny, if I look at all that work, it's very happy work. It's not sad. It's joyful—the color.

By the time I was ready to get back on stage, I couldn't go back. Phranc, so I came

back as Hot August Phranc and I did my Neil Diamond show. That's how I got back on stage, and then Phranc was the opening act. That was fun because I wasn't me. It pulled me back.

A couple years went by. I was up in San Francisco and I saw Team Dresch play. I was like, "Yes!" Then Kill Rock Stars put out *Goofyfoot*. I put out *Milkman*. I put that out myself because I thought I could do a better job. No. Couldn't. Terrible. I'll never put out my own record all by myself ever again. It's hell.

Ever since, I've had two careers. I got to do some illustration work. I gave myself my own shows. During that period of time, our first daughter came. I was partnered with Lisa. I couldn't go on the road 'cause I had a daughter at home and I needed to get a job. I don't know how I came up with it, but I opened up the phonebook, I went to the Tupperware office, and said, "I want to sell Tupperware."

Todd: You sold the shit out of Tupperware.

Phranc: I did. I sold Tupperware for a long time. I was a top seller and two of my

protégées from Phranc's A Lot, my team, Dixie Longate and Kay Sedia—they're both still top sellers. Monique Jackson-Cooke—she was my manager—we both trained them.

Todd: How long were you selling Tupperware?

Phranc: I started in either '99 or 2000 and I sold until 2006 or '07. I was with Tupperware until 2010. I finally stopped. I raised consciousness in a whole different way.

Todd: Sometimes it's hard to be very expressive about something that's very important to you in another culture. Tupperware culture—which I know nothing about—especially going up levels, seems more corporate, staid, and reserved. Did you feel more like a diplomat?

Phranc: No, I found another women's community that was amazing. I had been in this radical, political women's community. Then I was in the feminist arts community. Then I was in the women of the punk rock scene, and then I got to be in Tupperware. Monday nights was Tupperware rally night.

sang. I wrote this Tupperware song. I'm out as the All-American Jewish Lesbian Folk-Singing, Surfing, Tupperware Lady. I'm doing the same job I've always had, but I'm selling Tupperware.

Todd: And you're locally based.

Phranc: And I love uniforms, so I made a uniform. I was really fun. I loved it and then when I got to the corporate level—there was one drag queen who was doing it then. Now, it's crazy queer, but I was the only dyke. They really didn't know what to do at the corporate level. They were very nice to me.

You'd go to the party. You'd sell. Then you'd just bring all your orders, the paper, back to the office and they'd process everything. In the course of me selling, it went online. Then you had to do all the input yourself. They said you made more, but you really didn't.

It was a good consciousness-raising exercise on every level: in the living rooms, for me, and for the corporate. You gotta do what you love and I found another way to do what I loved. I got two cars from Tupperware.

PERSISTENCE AND RESILIENCE ARE TWO THINGS THAT PUNKS HAVE THAT THEY REALLY NEED TO HANG ON TO. AND THE DO-IT-YOURSELF THING.

It was still old school. When I started selling Tupperware, it was just the same way it was in the '50s.

Brownie Wise was the amazing woman behind Tupperware. Mary Kay and Brownie Wise were both trained by Stanley Home Products to sell pots and pans during World War II. So they would have these parties in living rooms and they would sell to housewives. Mary Kay took that party plan technique of sales and developed Mary Kay products. Her own company. The genius. Brownie Wise took it and gave it to Tupperware and Tupperware burned her really bad.

Todd: Your ethics behind your work there was, "I look for similarities and not differences."

Phranc: Tupperware was really fun. It was a really great community. The women were amazing. Every kind of woman you could imagine. And it was very empowering because when I started, you had to pay for your sample kit, which was about a hundred dollars. They trained you how to sell. Then you'd go to somebody's house and they'd have a party. And because they had a party, they'd get all this free Tupperware, so that's your incentive for having the party. All your friends are going to buy Tupperware. So when I did my Tupperware parties, I

They had incentives that worked for me then. It empowers a lot of people to provide for their families.

Todd: In more recent years, between 2011 and 2014, you were temporarily sidelined from an injury?

Phranc: [Rolls up sleeve on right arm and reveals large scars] I was attacked by a pit bull. It took me out for awhile.

Todd: Holy moly.

Phranc: I was visiting somebody down south. They weren't there. I'd knocked on the door. I didn't know the dog. The gate had been left open and the dog came out and got me. Took me down. They couldn't get the dog off.... I'm a dog lover.

Todd: Pit bulls are just very strong-jawed dogs.

Phranc: And they can't release once their jaws go. So, I feel bad for the dog. The good news is that everything works. I can play music again. I can make my art. I had a really good surgeon. I was really fortunate. Happened to get the best emergency treatment, had great rehab. So now I'm back.

Todd: You and Alice Bag are back together playing in a band called Phag. How did that come together?

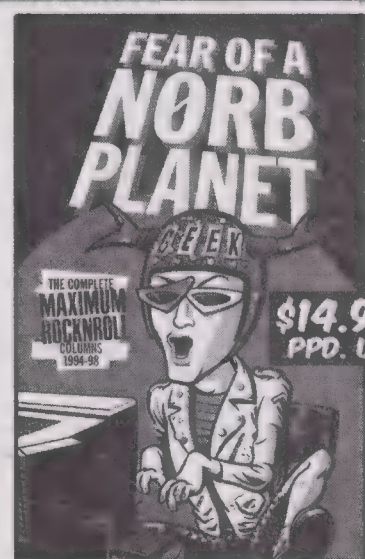
Phranc: I've always wanted to do something with Alice. I was watching some old Smothers Brothers and I thought, "That would be really good." Political songs, acoustic. Funny.



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Topical. I told Alice, "So go watch some Smothers Brothers." Then we got together. I had a song that I had the beginnings of that I had written while I was walking on the beach that's called "Wall." I brought it to Alice and she helped finish it. We started singing that together. We worked out our little parts. The Woman's Building was having an archiving project and they were doing this celebration at Avenue 50 Studio, the same place as Razercake's 100 issue party. That's where we had our debut. We have five or six songs. We don't have a big set yet, but we're working on it. We meet and practice once a week and we're building our repertoire. We're excited.

And I am going to release a live album. I recently played McCabe's. It's a pretty good live show, so I'm thinking of doing that before I go into the studio and make a Phranc studio album. It has all the new material and the old material, so it's a pretty good mix.

Todd: As a fellow aging punk, I'm glad that you're embracing age. You have a song that you played around a decade ago, called "Old in L.A."

Phranc: I played it because I got a City of Los Angeles COLA grant, to write these songs about L.A.

Todd: What advice do you have for punks getting along in age? You made some pretty drastic life decisions, like not becoming a junkie.

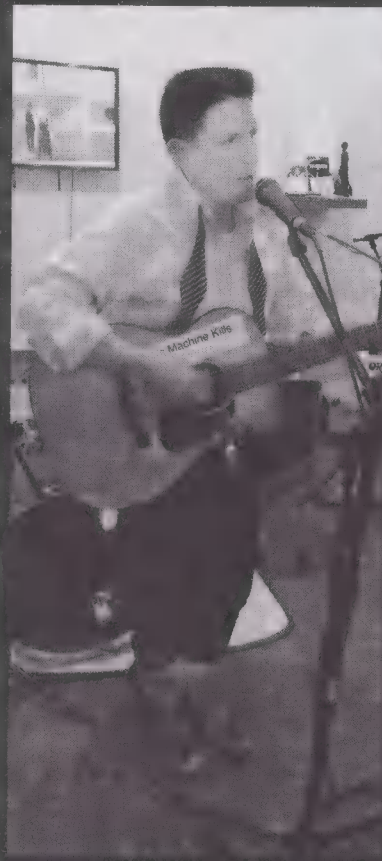
Phranc: That was a long time ago. It was either live or die, and I decided I was going to live. I wrote that song "Life Lover" when I was suicidal. I figured it would look really bad if I killed myself, and then it served me pretty well. [laughs] If you only knew.

Todd: The span for creativity is very long.

Phranc: Yes. I just turned sixty and I think that I've just hit my stride again. My second Saturn cycle. I'm ready to go. I want my compendium to come out when I'm sixty-five: all my art, all my music, writing, surfing, swimming, everything in one chunk. I just started the archiving process, so I've got a lot of work to do now. I mean, how do you get old? You just keep breathing, right? Persistence and resilience are two things that punks have that they really need to hang on to. And the do-it-yourself thing. Those three things are awesome. You watch the legacy of DIY now, right. How long have you been doing this magazine?



PHOTOS BY TONY JACINTO



Todd: Seventeen years.

Phranc: Right. Now you watch kids on YouTube, people putting bands together. It's the same...

Todd: Genesis. Reason behind it.

Phranc: Exactly. They just have more tools, so you can do everything on your computer now. You don't need to go to the copy shop. But it's that same—if you want to make it happen, you can make it happen. That's how we made our bands. You want to be an artist? Well, make some art.

I wanted to be a cake decorator and my friend had started her business because she learned to become a cake decorator by working at Ralphs, so I thought, "I'm not going to go to culinary school. I'm going to go to Ralphs and I'm going to get trained."

Todd: And it's a lot cheaper.

Phranc: So I got a job at Ralphs. This was about eight years ago, not that long ago. It's hard to get a job, any kind of job. It's hard to get a job at Ralphs. You have to fill out that online application. Then you've got to show up. It's really kind of humiliating. I got the job, but not in the bakery. They said I had to start as a courtesy clerk, which is bagging groceries. So I showed up in that awful outfit and I started bagging groceries every day. They wouldn't give you full time; they'd only give you twenty hours.

Todd: No benefits.

Phranc: Right. Couldn't get into the bakery, but I'm bagging the groceries. I tell you, it was hard. Had my "Phranc" nametag on and people came through the line and said, "Oh, hi. I have your record." Very humbling. And there were some people from my daughter's school who would come through the line and go, "Ooooh." [sucks in a breath] But I was determined. I was going to get into that bakery.

Somebody came through my line one day. I was bagging their groceries and they said, "I'm a really big fan of your art. Love your work. I've been following you for awhile." I asked, "Are you an artist?" He's like, "No, I have a gallery. Craig Krull. I'm right across the street at Bergamot. You should come by and visit." Lunch time, in my Ralphs outfit—because I had my portfolio in the car, 'cause somebody told me, "Always have it with you 'cause you never know when you're going to get that opportunity." I was like, "Hi," and he was like, "Oh my god, that was really fast." I made friends with him. Developed that relationship. A year or two later, I had my first solo show with him.

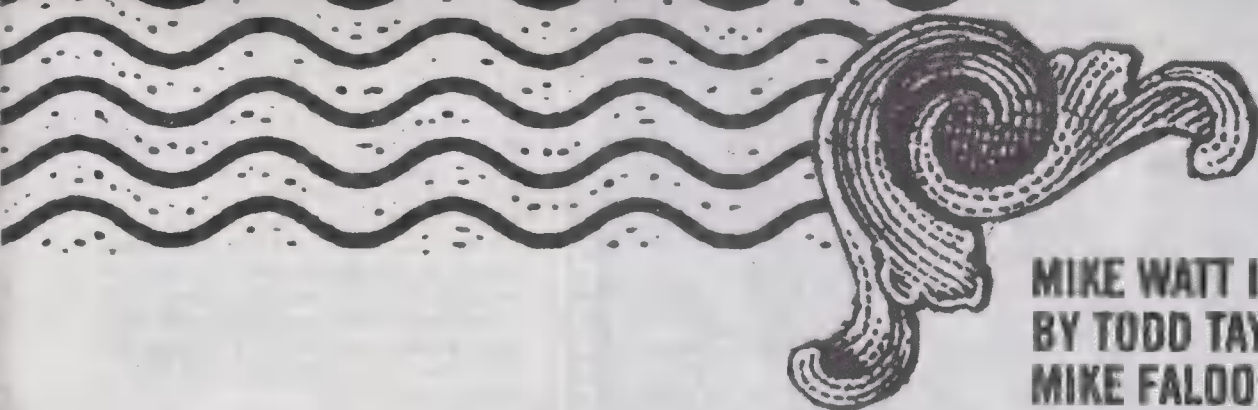
You never know. How old was I then? Fifty-four, fifty-five. You've got to do what you love to do. That's the main deal, don't you think?



MIKE

WATT

PART II

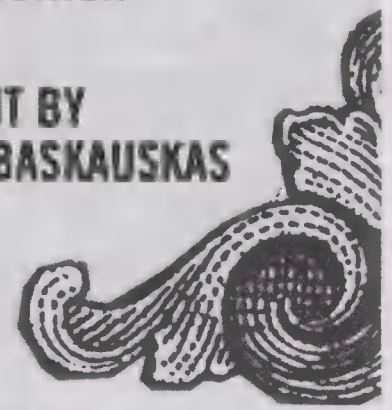


MIKE WATT INTERVIEW BY TODD TAYLOR AND MIKE FALDON

INTRODUCTION BY TODD TAYLOR

PHOTOS BY EL DIABLO, ROBERT IBARRA, AND DAN MONICK

LAYOUT BY ERIC BASKAUSKAS



Creativity mixed with ethics is the portal to a parallel universe.

Welcome to Part II of the interview with Mike Watt, widely known as one of the best bassists in punk rock of any era and a founding member of The Minutemen and FIREHOSE. He is ■ foundational and continuing pillar in Los Angeles punk rock. (San Pedro is located in the City of Los Angeles.)

In Part I of this interview Watt covered—among a host of other topics—the power of zines, his friendship with D. Boon, the almost absolute worst case scenario for an ingrown hair from a bike seat, his 125 months in The Stooges, the death of bumper stickers, Dadaism, punk as a movement, the mental gulags that genres often create, the Ramones, Bags, and Screaming Trees, and the magnetism of San Pedro, Calif.

In Part II, Mike Faloon and I hold on as Watt captains the ship over a vast map of largely uncharted territory. Topics include some of the following...

How the Minutemen briefly flirted with art rock (involving grease and their newly shaved heads). A note left on a napkin to Mike Watt from John Fogerty of Creedence Clearwater Revival in the wake of D. Boon's death. The waters of Watt being on a major label for fourteen years while keeping his autonomy and integrity. Clenchedwrench Records. Converting the power from the Jackass franchise with the Minutemen song "Corona" into money for D. Boon's family well after D. Boon's death. And why Sammy Hagar can still go fuck himself.

Sit back, read on, pull out a mirror, and contemplate the abyss.

Watt: Remember, we started this talk with bins and genres. There's got to be forces that work against those kinds of things at the same time. There must be other ways of understanding things without putting them into little corrals and pig pens. Turd boxes. Turd purse.

Always thought of a band name—Turd Purse. Our bodies, we're carrying turd around with us. [laughter] I love that word Nervous Gender, band name. But Turd Purse is right up there, too. I'm just waiting for the right proj.

Todd: I've never heard you talk about how you got involved with Columbia. Especially somebody new reading, could say, "Well, you talk a good spiel about being independent. Why did you go on and stay on a major for fourteen years?"

Watt: One thing, integrity. And autonomy. So when you make that contract, you keep one hundred percent artistic control.

Todd: Was that difficult?

Watt: At that time—you gotta understand the time. This A&R man went around with ■■ for two, almost three, years before I said yes.

Todd: What year is this?

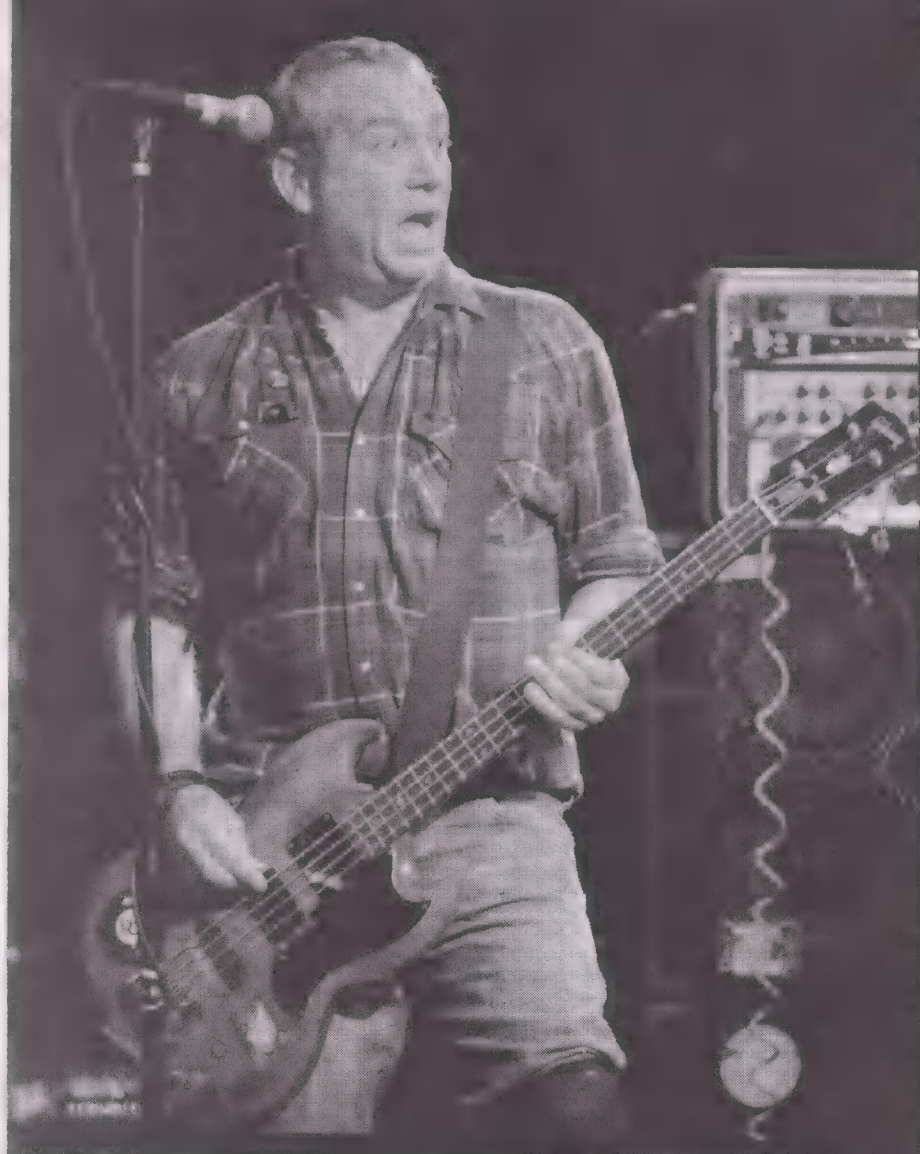
Watt: It was 1991 to 2005. Fourteen years. If you know anything about 1991, isn't there ■ movie with that date in it? *The Year That Punk Broke*. I gave Dave Markay some lip, but I like him a lot. He's ■ nice guy. One of the words I really hate, "alternative," right? So they're looking to sign all kinds.

Let me give you a little side example. Port of Los Angeles. I come here in '68 from Virginia. There's this war, that's why. Vietnam's closer to California than Virginia. War ends. About the same time the containers come on, instead of palettes. Basically, they're boxcars with the wheels off it. Took two hundred years to figure that out. Some guy named McLean in New Jersey had a big company called SeaLand. We don't need the navy base because the war's over. China's open for business. Mao Zedong dies. All those three things transform Port of Los Angeles, along with our sisters in the East, Long Beach. Biggest port in the country. We do forty percent of this shit. A lot of that stuff was ■ coincidence of things happening at times.

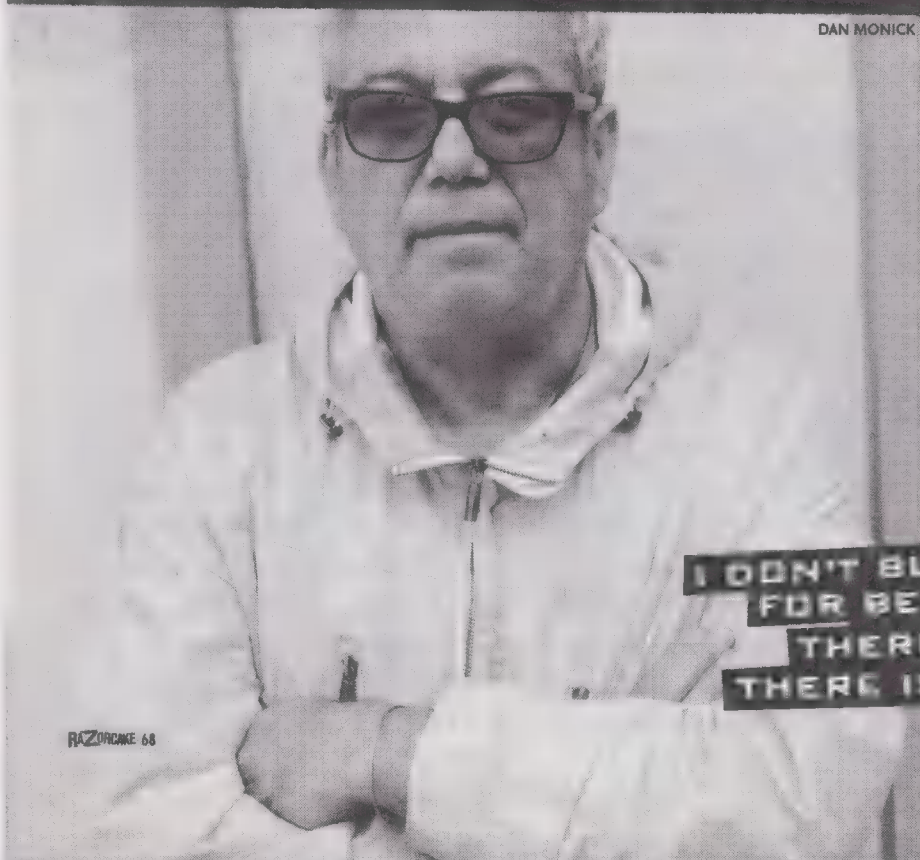
At that time, they could afford to give me a contract that was one hundred percent—no advance money, hardly. The analogy I always used for that situation—I'm not trying to be ■ smartass—but if I'm going to call you on a pay phone, remember those days?

Todd: Absolutely.

Watt: AT&T, not too indie of a company, but as long as they don't jump on the phone and tell me what to say, I don't hang up. I'm on the freeway and a Volkswagen goes by. The limousine goes by. As long as they don't jump in the wind of my boat and grab the wheel, I'll use a military term—I'm not trying to say I'm all clever-ass—repurposing. In certain situations, if I've got a sailboat, even though I may be really good at praying, I get out there and start telling the wind which way to blow. What was the Greek story? Because they got to get over to Troy to get Helen back. They ain't got the wind. So this dude ponies up his daughter. Tricks her. "Here's ■ marriage." Kills her and the gods give him ■ sack of wind. It worked there.



DAN MONICK



I DON'T BLAME PEOPLE
FOR BEING CYNICAL BECAUSE
THERE IS A LOT OF JIVE
THERE IS A LOT OF FRONT.

There are certain kinds of situations where you've got to navigate the thing. In my mind—since when I learned at eleven years at SST—was autonomy. And artistic integrity. Am I going to give that up?

Todd: Learn your contracts.

Watt: The other side—one thing that was hard about the indie scene was distribution, because the distributors would set up their own labels. You'd be competing—it was kind of jive because they would favor the stuff they're putting out. Then a lot of labels got sunk by distributors. That thing with Jem.

Faloon: Zines too.

Watt: And zines too. Terrible. I'm not trying to make any excuses or apologies for corporate bastards or anything, but human behavior can operate pretty lame on the little level, too. That's one thing I thought. When you put out a record with a big label—they've probably got mafia help, no I shouldn't say that—they've got their own distro. And that's why I thought maybe more people could get a chance.

And look back in my history. People know about Minutemen. But a lot more people saw FIREHOSE than saw Minutemen. It was just different dynamic, different scene. Of course, one band couldn't exist without the other. Edward came to help me in a really hard time. He came at that time because of Kurt (Cobain). Now, Kurt wanted to be in the fuckin' Germs. He didn't like alternative. He wasn't into that shit. Every time I'd see him, he didn't really want to talk about it. Neither did I. All this stuff. None of those guys did. A lot of it was just luck and timing of things.

But, on the other hand, I think what you're getting at, I seen guys tie on the puppets. "I had my 'little kid in the garden' time in the punk movement, now I'm going to grow up." And, "Oh, the A&R man is taking us out to dinner." No, you're taking the A&R man out to dinner. For those guys, especially to try to support a family, yeah that's sad that way—but on the other hand, I'm not sad—I have no horror stories from the big labels.

Todd: Huh.

Watt: Why? Magnetic personality, all this other shit? No. You just don't buy into that crap to begin with. This is the thing that puts out the music. I'm not that much into this company, but I've got something to say to you in Highland Park, all the way from Pedro.

Todd: The thing I want to express to people who are reading this—during this time, you recorded with Off With Their Heads, their split with Discharge. You worked with Craig Ibarra with Water Under The Bridge in 2010 with putting out the Reactionaries' 1979 album, which one side is a remastered from

what you recorded in Hurley's garage and the other side is incorporating twenty-three Pedro musicians.

Watt: Well, that's Craig Ibarra. I couldn't believe he wanted to do that because D. Boon wouldn't even write songs for that band. D. Boon was only in that band for me. Those are my first songs. They're terrible. Nothing against Martin and Georgie. They're beautiful, but Watt is really stinking it up. And Craig Ibarra wanted to put that out. You gotta start somewhere.

See, when we saw The Bags, the first thing that came out of my mouth was, "We can do this." I wasn't even thinking. "Goddamn." So, I wanted to make a band right away. D. Boon wouldn't make a band right away, for some reason. That's why I answered that *Recycler* ad.

We got to the place with the male prostitutes. Yeah, that was off-air, people. That was another life lesson. Life is for learning. That's the bottom line of my third opera (*Hyphenated-Man*).

Anyway, what we did music-wise, after I was enlightened why busses aren't being chartered on Santa Monica Boulevard in 1976—(Watt mistook large groups of male prostitutes for folks waiting for busses.)—we do only one song for three and a half hours. "I Wanna Be Your Dog," just over and over and over. Hours. I was so into it. I'd never played with other people before. So, I come home, get the stuff back in the Bug, get back to Pedro, and I tell D. Boon. He says, "Okay, I'll make a band with you, but you've got to name it. So make a list of names." Turd Purse was not the one. [laughter] Dick Crane And The Blue Veins. Wedding Tool. All this shit.

But one of them was Reactionaries because I thought a lot of ways—our involvement with the movement—was total reaction against arena rock. It's hard to tell people—people have club experience in their lives really young now, like Stooges guys did in the '60s. Ronnie (Asheton) told me about seeing Jimi Hendrix. All the England bands used to come through Windsor, Canada and Detroit, the Ambassador Bridge. He saw Jimi. Hundred people in a little club called The Fifth Dimension. He said, "No one would come up to the front of the stage." He did. Jimi's wearing a high school marching band jacket and Mitch Mitchell's got a bucket on each side of his drumset. One's got the Budweisers and one's for puking. [laughter] I couldn't see the buckets. I couldn't see the drummer. I was sitting so far back in the Long Beach Arena, the Forum.

So, it's hard to explain. I didn't mean reactionary, like right wing/left wing jargon. We are reacting because I'm an idiot.

Sometimes, I remember reading Jim Joyce's—one of his first books—"Dub-Liners." I didn't think it was people from Dublin. I saw Bob Marley and I had a Trinity record, and dub. I didn't really realize it was written in the teens (1914). "Dub-Liners"! I'm a dumbfuck. But sometimes you don't have somebody to help you with these little things.

I remember touring. There's a generic term in Texas for a road that runs alongside the freeway called "frontage."

Todd: Yeah.

Watt: We thought it was a road. We started calling it "The French road, the front-age." "God damn, there's that road again! How long is this motherfucker?" Same thing, when we were on a tour in Virginia and we want to find Appomattox, the county seat. We think it's some fucking chair. It's a generic name for the building. There's no chair. There's no county seat. Sometimes, things are like that.

So, anyway, D. Boon makes a band with me, just to do it. And then he quits it. I didn't want to be in a band without him. He found a replacement and everything. We did one gig after.

Again, he does the same thing. "You make names." And I had—Turd Purse was on there—again, seventy names. They're the worst. But I had one; it was a two-word name, "Minute Men." (Like "Small Men.") They're spelled the same, but you pronounce them different. I was thinking of arena rock and we're tiny, little guys. D. Boon says, "No, no. Make it one word. 'Cause there's these motherfuckers who are appropriating patriot symbols and we'll dilute 'em." Same thing happened to us in the '90s with the idiots on the border. People think we were a part of that. I'd have to say to them, "No, no, no." But that's the genesis of our and we got together.

But before that, in the '90s, I did several records for Kill Rock Stars. A single with Nels Cline, The Black Gang. A Dos album. Independent records, big-time. And then, because of technology, I have a ProTool in my pad. HD little setup, preamp, compressor. I've made whole albums with people I've never even met. You collaborate with people like this all the time.

What happened thirty years after starting New Alliance? Clenchdwrench Records. Chuck D (Public Enemy), he goes, "Cycles, cycles, life comes in cycles, old is new, no, I ain't a psycho." There's ways of doing things. I think you've always got to check yourself in the ethic mirror. See what you're doing really holds water. Do you feel good about it?

I've kept my life pretty simple. I didn't raise a family. I remember in the old days,

I'd see a Budweiser poster of a band in the club, and you're thinking, "Man, he's got kids to feed." It's not like he's a total sell-out or anything. It must be a tough sitch. I think you've got to ask yourself about those kinds of things. And to cry later on—what do you call that?—insurance plan. Militant street cred. If you don't want to pretend later, then don't pretend in the beginning. But people are like this. That's why I like Halloween. [laughter]

Todd: I want to go over the musical notes to "Corona" that were put into *Jackass*, the television show and the movies. How did they pick that?

Watt: Spike Jonze gave me a VHS of the pilot and he said, "Can we use 'Corona'?" It's his creation, that show. And I had done some videos with him. One for "Piss Bottle Man," "Liberty Calls," off my first opera, and "Big Train." Got sued for that one. Fucking Union Pacific.

Todd: Rail pigs.

Watt: They own the shape of the toy train. Whatever. That's going down the wrong way. But D. Boon's daddy, really bad emphysema and this was a way, the bones (money), because D. Boon wrote that song.

Todd: So they pay royalties directly to D Boon's father.

Watt: Right. Then his family, after he passed on. So, I only saw the pilot. The guy was tasered in the balls, put in the shitter, turned upside down. I thought it was kind of real.

Todd: Was this pre- or post-taint problems for you?

Watt: This is in the '90s. This goes back. I think it's post-taint illness. You know taint, right? It "aint the asshole, t'aint the balls." [laughter] Weird thing. But it was a way of D. Boon being able to help his pop without D. Boon being here. It wasn't about being mersh (commercial).

Here's the genesis of the song because I wrote a song at the same time. It starts off with us playing with Johanna Went at the Whiskey. Artistic. She does this crazy performance. And Georgie says, "We should be artistic, so why don't we shave all our hair off and then use oil, like we're burnt-out match heads?" [laughter] So me and D. Boon—we'd never cut our hair off before and didn't know about clippers. We used one of those Bics.

Todd: From the beginning? Ouch.

Watt: Luckily, I was first. My head looked like a motocross track. Bloody. Then we get up there and Georgie didn't do it. D. Boon reaches under the car, starts getting the grease. You know where you see the picture? It's the cover of *Flipside*. Al took it of us, peeking around the door.

Todd: The issue with Sin 34.

A LOT OF PHONY,
SHALLOW CRAP.

I DON'T BLAME PEOPLE
FOR BEING A LITTLE SUSPECT.

I'LL JUST TELL YOU
EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED.

Watt: They were on that bill also. And D. Boon looks like Uncle Fester. So, the weekend, we go down to Rosarito Beach in Ensenada, Mexico. It's the Fourth of July. It's Sunday, which happens to be their election day. First, we ■ brainiacs, showing how intelligent we are—pelon, bald—pretty soon, pelon rojo—because you're in the beach, swimming. You have to breathe, so you're eight, nine hours in the ocean. We got so sunburned and we'd never been bald-headed before. So we were burned, burned bad. And borracho and stuff.

In the morning, there was a lady picking up the bottles, and that's where he wrote it. We go into the little town; in the taqueria, I ask the guy about the election because these soldiers come into town. They're teenagers and they start handing out bread. It's the PRI, the party. By coincidence?

It's Fourth of July. I'm thinking about the U.S., but I'm in another land and it's celebrated a little different. But they're having ■ election; they're doing it their way. I remember I asked the guy, "Who are you voting for," and the guy laughed. "Banditos." With my bright red head. The guys are singing songs to us, making fun of us. So I wrote, "I Felt like ■ Gringo," and D. Boon wrote "Corona." All from that experience in Mexico. Yeah, so sometimes the real life comes in. I've had people come up to me about "The Jackass Song." They don't even know the title.

It did look like it was genuine because it didn't look like the dude was faking in the porta-shitter. They give this guy an orange, county outfit, handcuff him, and put him a hardware store to ask about hacksaws. Of course, they call the sheriffs. The lady sheriff, brand new on the job, forgets to put the car in park. Runs up on the side. It almost turned into ■ whole nightmare.

So, knowing Spike, working with him, it didn't seem like jive. And then that's all it was, just ■ and him. It was no, "Let's have lunch," and the meetings, and crap like that. It was just dudes. Look, I don't blame people for being cynical because there is a lot of jive, there is a lot of front. There's a lot of shill, ■ lot of phony, shallow crap. So I don't blame people for being ■ little suspect, and I'll talk about it. I don't really have a whole library of excuses; I'll just tell you exactly what happened.

Todd: But you also have this active engagement and creativity, continuously. For decades.

Watt: I wasn't ■ musician. I got into music to be with my friend. Then I lost him. But it's been personal. If I'm gonna to do it, I'm gonna do it. Some of these guys, they don't even want to talk about music. They won the lotto. It's something they have to put up with. Then the other dudes—seems like there's no justice. Other dudes, they get no reward at all. They get stomped down, they get beat down, snuffed out. It doesn't seem like a lot of justice in the big picture of expression—not just music, but the writing.

Look at ■ reporter now. Number one, they're not getting paid to make a living. Number two, they're being called an enemy. The journalist thing is way low now. It's bizarre. So, when it comes to me, I don't want to be jive about it. Just grateful. And one way to be grateful is not just with talk, but in action. Play Jim's pad next week, The Smell, which I hear is turning into parking lots.

Todd: And you do regular shows with Martin Wong, Save Music in Chinatown.

Watt: Yeah, no problem. Whenever you play, you're practicing for the next time you play. And all payment ain't in the coin. You gotta do the prac with your guys inside the prac pad. But, really, it's doing it in front of people, man. You never know when the last gig is. I remember Raymond (Pettibon) took me—god, by now I've learned about—Little Jimmy Scott, Yma Sumac, and one cat, Warne Marsh. And he died on stage—he didn't see this gig—but it was a little bit after. And he was playing that song, "Outta This World." Maybe that's the way to go out... maybe not to "White Room," or "Tales of Brave Ulysses."

I couldn't believe—I was in Mobile—this is about two and ■ half years ago when he passed away.

Faloon: Jack Bruce (Cream)?

Watt: Yeah. I couldn't believe how heavy it was on me. You know that thing where you get on the Youtube.com and you watch the songs? Bourbon'd up, start crying. I was in Mobile, sweaty. I owed him so much, you know? I remember the 8-Track. It was ■ anthology. There were so many repackagings. Anyway, you put that in and the bass guitar was something else. Because D. Boon's ma put me on it. I kinda found out bass was like right field of Little League. [laughter] Nobody's going to hit the ball out there.

And then when the movement came and the equal footing that all the instruments get put on. In fact, ■ lot of the bands had ladies on bass. The first rock'n'roll lady—not tambourine or backup singer—was Suzi Quatro. She was a bass player. It was real liberating for me.

The whole political thing about the Minutemen, not really the words. Words, D. Boon called, "Thinking out loud." It was in the music. We got the idea, kinda, from R&B, funk. Make the guitar little and trebly and you can bring the drums and bass up. Nels (Cline) talks about it in the documentary. Nels hit on it really early, that that was the real politics.

The other thing was thinking out loud, expressing yourself. No shame in that, right? How many civics lessons in school pounded that into our brain? So, that's when I deal with those moral dilemmas; they actually aren't because just stay on the safe side of integrity. Now, you're taking chances, you're rolling the dice.

Somebody like me, I don't know if I'm going to make stuff merish for people, so why not just trying being Watt and let the merish dudes be merish? Like we said at the beginning, parallel universes. If they

don't jump on the line, or jump through the window, then we can coexist. That's probably the fairest way to handle it or it's going to get goofy in some weird ways and veer off.

Faloon: I'm looking at the FIREHOSE record *If'n*, looking at the flipside of the label, with the John Fogerty signature. I've never heard the context or the story behind that.

Watt: In fact, the guy who gave that to me, I saw a museum show. This guy's actually from Pedro. He started out making horror movie masks. I think his name's Chad. Now he makes artwork—people in their pad want a zombie head.

So, I play the opening and this guy, Randy West, I hadn't seen him since he gave this to me. This was on a napkin and he was working on a video for John Fogerty called "Old Man Down the Road." He talked to John Fogerty. Said, "Something happened." And John Fogerty knew about it, knew about D. Boon (being killed in ■ auto accident). He said, "I know that guy." Knew of us. So he writes that on a napkin. He said, "You give this to Watt." And that guy gave it to me.

You don't realize when I met D. Boon, the only rock band he knew—he didn't know about Cream or Who—he only knew Creedence. He had the first six records. In fact, there's ■ connect with that with the flannels. I grew up in navy housing. I didn't know about farmers and lumberjacks. Well, his mother puts me on the bass and all he knows is Creedence. The album covers, they're on the hardwood floor, grape juice. Cheap little stereos with speakers on wires, spread out. You got to put six quarters on the stylus, keep it from skipping, so I can't hear the fuckin' bass. I hear Stu Cook—good bass lines. But, one, I wasn't acclimated to ■ bass, and another thing, the fidelity was pfffft.

Faloon: And it didn't record the low end as much back then, too.

Watt: Well, I think the playback—these machines were almost close-and-play, nail for stylus. Kind of like a car radio. Mid-rangy. So, anyway, I look at the album covers. I look at the singer's shirts. And I go, "I'll wear his shirts and maybe D. Boon will still like me." So that's how I got into flannel. [laughter] Totally goofy reason.

Then I turned him onto Cream, Blue Öyster Cult, and he got into all that stuff. Huge influence, though, John Fogerty's guitar playing. Later, Buck Dharma and then Pete Townsend. Really trippy. Then, when the punk movement came, people like Pat Smear (Germs) and the guy who played guitar for The Pop Group. His name was Garth.

Actually, it goes back to this guy—not really ■ part of the movement but had ■ big influence on England guys. He's more like R&B. The band was called Dr. Feelgood and his name was Wilko Johnson. And he had this way of playing—it's really right hand-involved. Last year was his last tour. Cancer's killing him. They cut out this eight pound tumor. He survived. Look him up. That was a more commercial band than Pop Group; that guy did the same thing. Gang Of Four. You hear that kind of guitar?



FIREHOSE

from left to right: - photo: Naomi Petersen
Mike Watt
Ed Tromohio
George Hurley

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P.O. Box 2686
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COURTESY OF
CRAIG IBARRA

Todd: Really staccato.

Watt: K-kk-kk-gangganggang. Kind of like crazy sax, in a way. So, that's D. Boon later on, but he starts with John Fogerty. John Fogerty's a lot of Scotty Moore. He's into swamp. He's into blues, country. John Fogerty synthesized a lot. So when you think about the Minutemen, you think we're really a collection of things with Pedro on it.

Funny thing: all three of us are not from Pedro. We came there as boys. Georgie from Brockton, Mass. D. Boon actually born in Napa, Calif. I'm Portsmouth, Virg.

Todd: I think you can be native sons, now. I think it's official.

Watt: But it's trippy how those things happen. That's how this "Keep On Keepin' On" ended up on the ■ Side label. I always thought this was neat—but I never saw it before I got punk records—where they use the label for art and the other side for information, so I always did that when I could.

And *If'n* comes from ■ Bob Dylan song: "Don't think twice / It's alright if'n you don't know by now." And if'n is just ■ powerful word. If'n. 'Cause luck isn't always good. There's bad luck. Like Edward. His good luck. It's weird; duplicity of things. That's where this came from.

The funny thing was the cover, it's ■ picture of my bulkhead (wall), right, but there's a picture of Hüsker Dü on the

bulkhead, so people thought I was trying to pretend—what was that band? Plainfield? That put their album in a cover that looked Jello's. They use the same cover and the label, but the music, you put it on, it wasn't Jello. So they thought that's what I was doing.

But, it's just a picture. It's really my pad. I lived in a one room pad in Pedro for fourteen years. Had one socket. So this is a picture of me conked out. A Kachina doll. I'm dreaming of all this. This is where my head caught fire and I had the bandage. On the backside, where me and Georgie are showing our beads around our face and me doing ■ Madonna shot with the belly button. All this stuff is all internal. Nobody gets it. It goes way back to Minutemen stuff. *Double Nickels on the Dime*, it just meant going the speed limit.

Todd: Going fifty-five miles per hour. Fuck you, Sammy Hagar.

Watt: Yeah! That's right. 'Cause he had this thing that said he couldn't. He called himself The Red Rucker. D. Boon, said, "Yeah? Well, he's going to be safe with music but dangerous on the road. We're going to be safe on the road and dangerous with the music." [laughter] And then Joe Carducci got the idea of the car noises.

Todd: Starting and ending the sides and then doing the infinite loop on the inside.

Watt: Yeah, that's Joe Carducci, the desk

guy at the label (SST). He actually ended up writing lyrics to one of the tunes. You know, that album would have never come without the Hüskers, because they did *Zen Arcade*.

Todd: They did the double album.

Watt: We had one done in November, '83 and then they come in December. And we were like, "Fuck." So we had to write all these songs. We ran out of words. Jack Brewer's cousin. Dirk Vandenberg's landlady. One time, D. Boon was telling me my lyrics were too spacey. I gotta get more real. So I use the landlady's note about the tub leaking. "Don't use shower. My ceiling..." Cathy's ceiling. "Are these real enough, D. Boon?" He laughed.

If D. Boon wrote words and they rhymed, there was no way in the world I was getting them. But if they were just thoughts—"Fuck psychological means to sell..."—then that's what I got. "I got my bills and the rent, I might as well go pitch a tent, this ain't no picnic."

Which, by the way, he never mentions it in the song, but I remember when he wrote that song. His pop put in radios at a dealership. In the old days, dealers put in the radios and the mirrors. Cars didn't come with mirrors or radios. Just telling you. I'm from a different era. If you notice older cars, they have different outside mirrors. Now, they're molded in there; unified, part of the trim.

201-261-2305

Anyway, got him ■ job at this Buick pad in the parts department, and D. Boon was listening to soul music and the dude there did not want that on the radio. But D. Boon channeled it into "This Ain't No Picnic," like *ciao!* It ended up being our first video. We spent \$440.

Again, trying to stake some aesthetics to some ethics.

So, right away, after seeing The Bags, split the world up into two categories. There's flyers and there's gigs and everything that ain't a gig is a flyer. So, whoah, there's ■ new telephone pole in town. MTV. It actually gets into competition. Eddie Murphy said our name and we lost to a band called Kajagoogoo, who probably spent a little more than \$440.

John Jones of the Urinals did our last one. We did "Ack Ack Ack." It's actually four "acks," but we cut out one verse. And it's great. We played like the Three Stooges. Youtube.com, you can see it. This record boss asked us to clean up the office. We cleaned it up all right. I think the last part is Georgie popping D Boon's head out of the bulkhead with a 2" x 4". Something else. I think we spent two thousand. That was the most we ever spent on a video. Get the name out there. By the '90s, bands are spending more on the video than they are on the record. Now that's all gone. It's weird how these things come and go, right? You gotta hang on to something, right? Or you're going to be twirling down the toilet flush.

Todd: Trying to chase that next thing.

Watt: Keep an open mind and the philosophy of everybody's got something to teach you if you keep yourself open enough.

Faloon: Also going back to Minutemen days, you played a song with Charlie Haden. I was wondering how that came to be and why it was "Little Man with a Gun in His Hand."

Watt: That song, D. Boon wrote with Chuck Dukowski words. I think Chuck wrote it during that tour. Our first time to Europe was with Black Flag. Very kind guys. He wrote two songs. Actually, the first version was on *Buzz or Howl*, which is a better version. We should have never put that version on *Double Nickels*. It's terrible. But we didn't have an ending at the time, so we had to fade out. We thought, "Oh, now we've got an ending." Tells you about recording. There's something besides just being correct.

We're playing McCabe's. It's in Santa Monica. It's ■ guitar shop. Most of the stuff there is acoustic. In fact, there's guitars hanging on the bulkheads, right? I had seen Charlie Haden play with his Liberation Music Orchestra there, Raymond took me. That's where I first hear Nels Cline. He's playing Spanish nylon string guitar.

Now Radio Tokyo, where we did *Double Nickels on the Dime*, Ethan James, ■ young man named Josh Haden has a band called Treacherous Jaywalkers. A trio out of Paley (Palo Alto), rough part of town [laughter]. Very sweet kid. He wants me to produce. I've never really produced much.

Some Saccharine Trust. So, he's the son of Charlie Haden.

Charlie will bring his bass down. It's a two hundred year-old French bass. "You guys jam with him." And the thing with "Little Man with a Gun in His Hand," it's got this place in the middle that gets quiet and jams out. 'Cause Charlie didn't even bring an amp. We're playing with a stand-up. It's still kind of hard to hear him, but we could get little. So that's why that song was chosen. It was actually the dynamics of the music to give Charlie ■ chance to be in there with us.

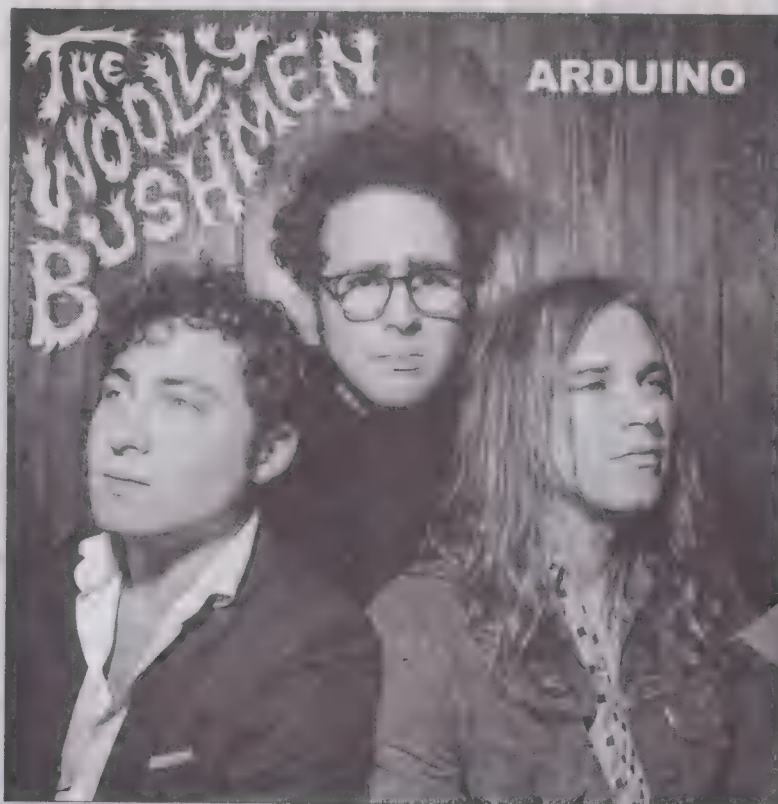
Faloon: To have some room for him.

Watt: Yeah, and we were very honored to get to do that. There's still good words, but the song wasn't picked for the words. He was so kind to us. Later on, I had many good talks with Charlie. We lost him a couple years ago. Incredible bass man. Besides his son, there's three sisters, triplets. They had a band together with Anna Waronker called That Dog in the '90s. And since then, Petra's the one I've worked with the most. She's on the second opera (*The Secondman's Middle Stand*). We're probably going to do an opera with words from Charlie Plymell. Charlie





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Plymell put out the first Zap Comix. He lived with Allen Ginsberg and Neil Cassady in The City. Trippy.

I met this older guy living in Cherry Valley. Talk about little scenes. Our scene was little. Their scene was thirty or forty dudes. A lot of 'em, like Charlie, from Wichita, Neal Cassady from Denver. They end up on the coast. Jack Kerouac, Lowell, Mass. These scenes—dada, beat—and beat, by the way isn't like this [snaps fingers] like beatnik, it's like beat-down! It's not little berets and goatees. Don't get the wrong idea.

Faloon: Not Dobie Gillis.

Watt: There's reasons why humans do this around arts. It's trippy. Sometimes it's a foist from upstairs to collect all the green paintings. The art collectors, the whole series. But, sometimes, I think it's a genuine kind of thing that people feel they need to coalesce around, rally around, in order to be springboards and launch pads for each other. For us, it's the movement. There are other

people at different times who had different names, but, in a way, it seems like the same kind of truth. There was something called "hermetic" thinking. Mercury, Hermes—native people call him Kokopelli. He's got the bump and the flute. Tricksters. Kachina [points to *If'n* album cover] probably heard that. They're messengers. Prometheus.

There's many masks, but a lot of this stuff, there's a truth in there and it's sincere, coming together. I think that's why we still got a lot back then. And I embrace it without nostalgia, not sentimental. Sometimes, it can get like *Happy Days*, right? Potsie looked like he was fifty. Fuck that shit. I remember my pop when that series came on, he was like, "Those were not happy days." So I'm not trying to romanticize those older days.

I just give you a little clue when you hear this stuff. "Why did the Minutemen sound so different?" If you were there in those days and you heard The Fall or Noh Mercy—it was just drums and singing, that song "Caucasian

Guilt." Intense song. I first heard it on a record from England, but Middle Class was on there. OC band. "Out of Vogue." They had two of the songs. It was called Fast Records. It was a little label. Fast didn't last, but they put out some good records while they were doing it.

And I still think it's going on. In fact, a lot of stuff, aiding and abetting, as far as technology—more econo. So it's not the bad new days. Now the dilemma—being creative. I think that should never get solved. You wonder why with all the hooks and rhyming words and melodies, why aren't there programs that are churning out songs? There's something about creative, right?

And that's a trip. I stare over the abyss and wonder.



TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE



Top Five Songs from LCD Soundsystem's New Album, American Dream.

1. "Oh Baby"
2. "Emotional Haircut"
3. "I Used To"
4. "Tonight"
5. "American Dream"

Alicia Armijo

and '80s, "We Were Going to Change the World"

3. Reaching the top of Bunsen Peak in Yellowstone with some friends, taking in the incredible view, and like, twenty minutes later, finally catching my breath
4. Watching Royal Headache at the Regent in July
5. Jogging/mostly walking to the new Downtown Boys album

Andy Garcia

1. Nick Cave: *Mercy on Me* by Reinhard Kleist (book)
2. Devo, *RecomboDNA 4 x LP*
3. Strangers, *The Mad CS*
4. Abe Garcia, *In No Particular Order Vol. II*
5. Stiff Love, *For the Whole Family CS*

Art Ettinger

- Playoff Beard, *Fun Is Fun LP*
- Don't Break Down: *A Film About Jawbreaker* (movie)
- The Templars, *Deus Vult LP*
- City Mouse, *Get Right LP*
- Turn It Around: *The History of East Bay Punk* (movie)

Becky Rodriguez

1. Razorcake 100th Issue
2. Razorcake 100th Issue show at Cafe NELA
3. New Vans
4. My sewing machine
5. Running

Bianca

Top Five Times I've Felt Alive This Summer/Early Autumn

1. Walking around at the SFV Zine Fest, seeing friends and talking to tablers I'd never met
2. Reading Stacy Russo's collection of interviews with SoCal punk ladies of the 1970s

Ill Pinkel

- Seeing Jawbreaker live in Chicago and being reminded how much that band means to me.
- Don't Break Down: *A Film about Jawbreaker* screening at the Vista
- Sheer Mag and Tenement, live at the Hi Hat
- The Chinchees, Self-titled LP
- Propagandhi, *Victory Lap LP*

Billy Kostka

- Dendo Marionette LP
- Vomit Pigs, *Useless Eaters*
- The Cowboy LP
- All of the Homostupids releases
- Nervous Gender, *Music from Hell*

Candace Hansen

- My Top 5 Skateboarding Accounts on Instagram Right Now*
- @laceybaker
 - @unityskateboarding
 - @technopagan420
 - @asloboh123
 - @programme

Chad Williams

1. Propagandhi, *Victory Lap LP*
2. The Lillingtons, *Stella Sapiente LP*
3. Exit Order, *Seed of Hysteria LP*
4. Sciatic Nerve, Self-titled LP
5. The Bronx, *(V) LP*

Chris Mason

1. Limp Wrist, *Facades LP*
2. Lithics, *Borrowed Floors LP*
3. Mr. Wrong, *Babes in Boyland LP*
4. Public Eye, *Relaxing Favorites LP*
5. Sievehead, *Worthless Soul LP*

Chris Terry

- Dame, Self-titled 7"
- Limp Wrist, *Facades LP*
- Modern Convenience, *What U? 7"*
- Rubber Mate, *Cha Boi/Hog Tied 7"*
- Howard Owen, *Oregon Hill* (novel)

Clara Luci Acosta

- Odd Robot, *A Late Night Panic*
- Sciatic Nerve, Self-titled
- The Newports, *That's Fine*
- Against Me! pre/after party with Toys That Kill
- Caskitt in general

Craven Rock

1. Hitchhiking to see the eclipse with Anna
2. Secret bay of sea lions Anna and I found hitchhiking Hwy 1, Oregon
3. *The Mercy of the Tide* by Keith Rosson (book)
4. A Raging Forest, Dearly Departed, Tobias The Owl, Animals Of Grace at Heartthrob
5. *The Journal of Albion Moonlight* by Kenneth Patchen (book)

Cynthia Pinedo

- 5 Albums on Heavy Rotation in 2017*
1. Worriers, *Survival Pop*
 2. SOAR, *Dark/Gold*
 3. Aye Nako, *Silver Haze*
 4. Brett Vee, *Real Soon*
 5. Paramore, *After Laughter*

Daryl Gussin

- Xetas, *The Tower LP*
- Xetas, *The Redeemer LP*

- Dark/Light, *Kill Some Time LP*
- Worriers, *Survival Pop LP* and live
- PHAG, live

Eden Kittiver

1. Propagandhi, *Victory Lap*
2. Iron Chic, *You Can't Stay Here*
3. Dancing with all my friends at Characters for Western Settings, Squarecrow, Reunions, and Baron Bandini
4. Sports / Plush, Split EP
5. Seeing Sheer Mag at the Hi Hat

Eric Baskauskas

Top 5 Tom Petty Memories

1. Hearing *Full Moon Fever* in my dad's car at age six and realizing that music was a thing that maybe meant something to me
2. Hearing "American Girl" on the radio, liking it, and then finding out that the same dude who made that other stuff made this too
3. Watching, recording, and re-watching the Tom Petty music video marathon on VH1
4. Having at least two copies of *Pack Up the Plantation: Live!* die in the tape deck
5. Teaching myself drums at age twenty-five by playing along with *Full Moon Fever*

Jim Woster

Top 5 Books I've Bought at Dollar Tree

5. *Lemons Don't Lie* by Richard Stark
4. *Pinkerton's Great Detective* by Beau Riffenburgh
3. *Point Omega* by Don DeLillo
2. *Going Clear* by Lawrence Wright
1. *Rivers* by Michael Farris Smith (A dystopian novel set on the Gulf Coast where storms never stop and which the government has abandoned)

Juan Espinosa

- Mala Leche 7"
- Tenement, *The Self-titled Album 12"*

Survival Pop

- The Nurse, *Discography 1983-1984 LP*
- Various Artists, *Tomorrow Will be Worse Vol. 2 LP* (2000 release revisited)
- Sacrificio, *Pulidores de Tumbas LP*

Kayla Greet

- *Mercy of the Tide* by Keith Rosson (book)
- Downtown Boys, *Criminal Code*, *My Parade* at Vera Project with Toby Tober
- Interviewing Andrew W.K. for my pinball podcast and A.W.K., live at Neumos
- 33 1/3: *I Get Wet* by Phillip Crandall
- Ramona (last Seattle show), Listen Lady (RIP), Choke The Pope, Pity Party, Ease, Anxious Arms at Black Lodge and Victory Lounge
- Terrible Feelings, *Tremors*

Kevin Dunn

1. Riot Fest 2017
2. Blondie, *Pollinator LP*
3. Zatopeks, *Ain't Nobody Left But Us LP*
4. Dopamines, *Tales of Interest LP*
5. Worriers, *Survival Pop LP*

Kurt Morris

1. *D Hunter* mystery series by Nelson George (books)
2. Propagandhi, *Victory Lap*
3. Camp Cope, *Audiotree Live*
4. Unsane, *Sterilize*
5. Exit Order, *Seed of Hysteria*

MariNaomi

1. My new podcast with Myriam Gurba: *Ask Bi Grlz!*
2. Myriam's hilarious memoir, *MEAN*
3. Talented friends who want to do podcasts with you
4. I hate my voice but I'm doing it anyway
5. IDGAF if we fail

Mark Twistworthy

- The Gotobeds, *Fucking in the Future +5 LP*
- Brix And The Extricated, *Part 2 LP*
- Proto Idiot, *Leisure Opportunity LP*
- Bear Trade, *Silent Unspeakable LP*
- Exhalants, demo

Megan Razzetti

1. Hot Water Music, *Light It Up LP*
2. Iron Chic, *You Can't Stay Here*
3. James Bowman's backup vocals in all my favorite Against Me! songs.
4. Seeing De La Soul perform with Gorillaz at The Forum thanks to my brother John.
5. Back-to-back nights of seeing Against Me!, Bleached, and The Dirty Nil with some of my favorite people.

Michael T. Fournier

- *The Vietnam War: A Film by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick*
- *Cometbus #58*
- Worriers, *Survival Pop LP*
- The Effects, *Eyes to the Light LP*
- Protomartyr, *Relatives in Descent LP* and live at Middle East downstairs, Cambridge MA 9/14/2017

Mike Faloan

1. Banditos, *Visionland LP*
2. Buddy Holly, *20 Golden Greats LP*
3. Stephan Crump, *Rhombal LP*
4. Man Forever, *Play What They Want LP*
5. Rev. Nørb, *Fear of a Nørb Planet* (book)

Mike Frame

- Midnite Snaxxx, *Chew On This LP*
- Pagans, entire catalog
- Puke, Spit, & Guts, *Eat Hot Lead LP* reissue
- Neil Young, entire catalog
- Mike Hudson, *Unmedicated CD*

Nighthawk

- The Copyrights, Fuck You, Idiot, Bad Taste, live in Carbondale, Ill. (Eclipse weekend)
- Lost Balloons, live in Chicago
- Stiff Little Fingers, live in Chicago
- The Vibrators (Final U.S. Tour), live in Chicago
- Cubs losing in the playoffs

Paul Silver

1. *Turn It Around: The Story of East Bay Punk* documentary film
2. Choke Up, *Stormy Blue LP*
3. Against Me!, *Bleached*, and

- The Dirty Nil at The Observatory North Park, San Diego
4. Success, Reunions, The Dodges, Allweather at The Ken Club, San Diego
 5. Oh! Gunquit, *Lightning Likes Me LP*

Rene Navarro

1. Going to a record store. Go outside, you'll feel better.
2. Daydreaming about how rad the 100th issue show is gonna be.
3. Finally considering myself a social worker.
4. Being a DJ for Razorcake at Footsies in L.A. Come kick it!
5. The squirrel that was kind of our friend for two days. Come back!

Replay Dave

1. UVTV, *Go Away 7"*
2. Rot In Coffins, live
3. Dead Milkmen, *Big Lizard in My Backyard* re-issue
4. UVTV, *Go Away 7"* played at 33 1/3 instead of 45
5. Bite Marks, live

Rev Nørb

- Liquids, *Hot Ligs LP*
- Indonesian Junk, *Stars in the Night LP*
- Skip Church, *Out of Time, In Touch with Satan LP*
- Ramones, *Leave Home* (40th Anniversary Edition) box set
- Frank Portman, *King Dork Approximately* (book)

Rich Cocksedge

- Wild Animals, Little Baby Sharks live at The Exchange, Bristol, U.K., 09/03/17
- Radium Grrrls, *Pro Choice 7"*
- DS-13 *Umeå Hardcore Forever, Forever Umeå Hardcore 2 x LP*
- Acrylics, "Structure" b/w "Gluttony" 7"
- Shellac, live at The Fleece, Bristol, U.K. 10/07/17

Sal Lucci

- Mick Trouble, *It's The Mick Trouble EP 7"*
- Link Wray reissue LPs
- Nosferatu, live. I'm not typically a fan of hardcore, but these kids were a ball of fire, from first note to last.
- Rik And The Pigs, live
- *Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic* (book)

Sean Arenas

- Various Artists, *I Hate My Fucking Band: A Japanese Tribute to M.O.T.O.* CD
- Razorcake #100 Celebration reading at Avenue 50 Studio
- Interviewing the great Udo Kier at Beyond Fest
- *Creep 2* by Patrick Brice (movie)
- *Ultra Violent #12* (Thanks, Art!)

Sean Koeppenick

- Grant Hart, RIP
1. "Wheels"
 2. "She Floated Away"
 3. "2541"
 4. "Evergreen Memorial Drive"
 5. "Admiral of the Sea"

Theresa Warburton

1. Propagandhi, *Victory Lap*
2. Chris Hannah's Final Conflict T-shirt
3. Sulynn Hago
4. "Single Moms to the Front"
5. Propagandhi, *Victory Lap*

Toby Tober

- Top 5 Movies I Have Recently Enjoyed
1. *Some Freaks*
 2. *I, Daniel Blake*
 3. *Wind River*
 4. *Brigsby Bear*
 5. *Dave Made a Maze*

Todd Taylor

- Xetas, *The Tower LP*
- Pine Hill Haints, *Smoke LP*
- Worriers, *Survival Pop LP*
- Three way book tie: *The Sellout* by Paul Beatty, *Turning Japanese* by MariNaomi, *Men Explain Things to Me* by Rebecca Solnit
- Limp Wrist, *Facades LP*
- Küken, *Self-titled LP*



ABRAZOS: Self-titled EP: 7" Flexi

This is what happens when two zine editors (*Suspect Device* and *Pea Brain*) come together to knock out a bunch of songs. The result is nine tracks, which, on first listen, are like taking a time machine back to the 1980s, both in sound and lyrical content. It's an amalgam of many bands of that era—predominantly Blitz and G.B.H.—and has a good mix of tunes and anger. Good stuff and worth checking out, especially for aficionados of the UK82 sound. —Rich Cocksedge (*Suspect Device*, suspectdevicech@gmail.com, suspectdevicezine.co.uk/ / *Pea Brain*)

ACRYLICS: "Structure" b/w "Gluttony": 7"

Two more tracks of ugly and uncompromising hardcore from Santa Rosa's Acrylics. It's amazing that within the chaotic uproar there are melodic moments, but to the credit of the band it manages to squeeze them into the mayhem. "Gluttony," the more accessible track, has a touch of East Bay Ray style punk/surf guitar, but for the main part on both tracks, the six string sound makes me consider a large turbine engine repeatedly being hit by a giant boulder. This is the best release I got to review for this issue. —Rich Cocksedge (*Iron Lung* / *Drunken Sailor*)

ACTIVE MINDS:***The Age of Mass Distraction: LP***

Thirty-plus (yes, that is correct!) years, and they are still going. Active Minds have always been one of the more outspoken bands within punk, and this album is a concise commentary on the current moment in time we are fumbling about in: screeds against economic inequality, sensationalist media, celebrity worship, social media, and other ills of today. Stylistically, they run the gamut of punk, d-beat, grind, and, at times, sounding influenced by bands like Blyth Power and Thatcher On Acid. When they go at it hard and fast, they really dish out some sonically scorching moments. Check out how effective the short blast "Side by Side" is. So good! —Matt Average (*Loony Tunes* / *SPHC*)

ALL BAD: No Good: CS

Beautiful, drawn-out, melodic crooning over straight-forward punk. Though this is another project out of Philadelphia, their drummer is Jarrett Nathan from New Orleans's Pears. To be fair, this release is a few years old and Pears are on tour so much that I'm not quite sure where they're based anymore. Quick riffs crash over non-stop cymbals and drum rolls, while the bass subtlety rumbles on in the background. Main vocals are taken over by guitarist Cat Park, but bassist Evan Bernard shares in the duties as well. "Solitude" instantly took me back to Tilt's "Fine Ride" with enough differences to make them each distinctive songs in their own right. In all, *No Good* feels a lot like an EP as the longest of their ten tracks doesn't even break the two and a half minute mark. It becomes awfully easy to listen to it three times in a row without feeling repetitive. —Kayla Greet (*Get Better*)

RECORD REVIEWS



"Touching" is an atypical adjective for a hardcore record, but it's the one that keeps coming to mind while listening to queer punk legends Limp Wrist's new LP.

—Chris Jerry

LIMP WRIST, *Facades LP*

ANDY HUMAN & THE REPTOIDS: *Refrigerator*: 7"

Oakland's Andy Human & The Reptoids describe themselves as "mutant sci fi rock n' roll" which is fitting, and they remind me of Gang Of Four meets Devo with a garage punk feel. "Refrigerator" features a slightly robotic vocal cadence that leads into a psychedelic bridge. This song is heavy on guitar and features every word that rhymes with "refrigerator." "You Don't Even Know" gives me Jay Reatard vibes, and I am here for that. —Cynthia Pinedo (*Total Punk*)

ANTI-SOCIAL / THE HAS BEENS: *Split: 7" EP*

Anti-Social: Full disclosure, here: Montebello's Anti-Social are familia. Not only do I consider them friends, they were part of the same small cluster of mid-'80s ELA backyard bands that spawned this scribe, they're one of the very select few of us to release anything on vinyl and, three-and-a-half decades down the road, they are still slugging it out in the trenches. Those reasons alone are enough to earn my utmost respect, but add the fact that they're still one helluva band and you have yourselves a party, kids. Here ye get three new recordings of two older tunes and one of more recent vintage that gallop along at a good clip, keep themselves well entrenched within hardcore's parameters, yet maintain a melodicism at their base. The songs come and go way too soon, which is more reason to supplement this with their most recent LP, *Life Long Addictions*, and to see them live. Has Beens: the large-brushstroke description of their work here would read the same as their record mates—

firmly rooted in hardcore while keeping a melodic sense to the proceedings. Closer examination, however, shows a bit more in the details: they move largely at a much zipper clip, a sense of humor is more in evidence, and they've got a drummer who contributes heftily to their personality. Tight and precise, they handily hold their own on this split, making for a good listen throughout. —Jimmy Alvarado (*Jerk Off*)

AUTARCH / LANDBRIDGE: *Split: 12"*

Seven heavier-than-heavy songs on this hardcore heavyweight split. From *Ashes Rise* and *Tragedy* are the obvious reference points for both of these bands. Superb musicianship and production make this an enjoyably dark listen. Both bands bring the riffs and the lyrical heft to make this a worthwhile addition to the "bleak and depressing" section of your record collection. —Chad Williams (*Replenish* / *IFB* / *Alerta Antifascista*)

AUTORAMAS: *Jet to the Jungle*: 7"

This Brazilian band has been going strong for twenty years, and this record makes it clear why. Autoramas know how to party. Their brand of tropical garage manages to draw from sounds of the past while still sounding totally urgent and dance-worthy. This record displays two very distinct sounds. The title track is a scorching rocker with male vocals. The flipside song, "Demais," comes in sweet and builds to a rousing, catchy chorus that begs for repeat listens. —MP Johnson (*Mandinga*)

BARCELONA: *Un Ultimo Ultrasonido Nació y Murió en Barcelona*: LP

Are these songs? Barcelona, already one of the modern greats of unhinged punk, has somehow managed to

obliterate and refine their operation all at once. They've made hardcore for noise freaks and noise for hardcore freaks, the truest (and most incoherent and most relatable) representation of reality in 2017 that I've heard so far. Absolutely essential. —Matt Werts (*La Vida Es Un Mus*, lavidaesunmus.com)

BASK: *C-30: CS*

Side A's collection of a half dozen lo-fi pop tunes that are reminiscent of Tom Grrrl or Michael Jackson Touchdown Pass. Home recordings, earnestness, catchy pop songs buried behind high-pitched, warbly vocals and boom-bap drumkits. Flipside's a slow, meandering, pretty instrumental track. Nice. —Keith Rosson (*Poison Moon*)

BEAR TRADE: Self-titled: LP

Pop punk band that unabashedly wears their influences on their leather(face) sleeve. Knee-jerk reaction was to pooh-pooh 'em for being so on-the-nose, but it rolled through I found myself realizing, derivative or not, they are in possession of some goddamned good songs, which they wield with deadly precision. Jimmy's black stone heart melted by "Sexy Beast's" smooth-as-buttah backing vocals, and two thumbs are currently being hoisted high. —Jimmy Alvarado (*Dead Broke*)

BLAHA: *Fresh Horse*: 7" EP

A mix of arty punk and garage sensibilities here for the first two salvos—dark, repetitive, raw. The closer, "The Day We Were Born," however, flips the script with a slinky bit of pop that manages to recall both the Zeros and mid-period Jesus And Mary Chain. —Jimmy Alvarado (*Slovenly*, slovenly.com)

BLENDOURS, THE: *No Respect*: 12"

The strongest trait is their Rezillos-style male/female collaboration on vocals. It's joyful, tightly packaged pop punk, with a fitting title to the record. Musically, it falls into the trappings of many '90s pop punk bands, as the songs run together with the same relentless tempo and format. They're one of those cigarette break-worthy bands where I wouldn't miss much between the first and last song, but I'd stay and watch if they were my friends and enjoy myself. It bores me when a band has little to say with song titles like "Leave the Girl," "The Sweetest Girl in Town," and "Not my Problem." And I get it. You can say similar things about the Queens or Screeching Weasel, and so on. But from my cynical perspective, I don't find enough substance. I want more aggression à la the Marked Men, or at least interludes from the formula they've meticulously followed, sticking to the recipe, and baked to the exact temperature. —Sal Go (*Eccentric Pop*)

BOX FAN: *Are We Even Try?*: CS

While Box Fan's previous releases were closer in my mind to later period Beat Happening (primitive, hip swinging, fast acting, bedroom pop), *Are We Even Try?* finds them with additional instrumentation in a new bass player,

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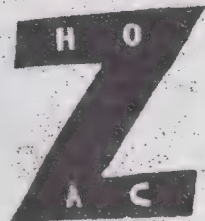


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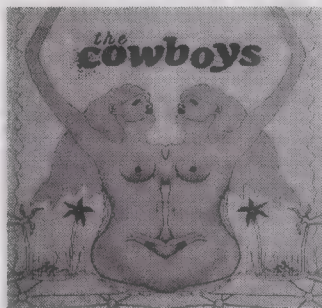


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BRIX AND THE EXTRICATED: Part 2: LP
I will argue with anyone that the era of the legendary U.K. post-punk group The

BROCCOLI: *Atom* '95
This cassette is a re-release of the Scottish band's 1998 album on Rugger Bugger Records. I vaguely recall Broccoli from that time but they never achieved the success of some of their

BURN: Do or Die: CD
With a small but mighty catalog of EPs, but no LP, Burn always felt to me like a band that didn't get enough credit. Fifteen years after their last release, 2001's *Cleanse*, founding vocalist Chaka Malik and founding guitarist Gavin Van Vlack resurrected the band for 2016's EP *From the Ashes*. On *Do Or Die*, all the ingredients that made Burn so intense are here, and then some. The songwriting of Van Vlack and Malik is at its finest, and the

BWAK DWAGON: Self-titled: LP
Oh shit, it's ■ concept album! About time traveling! Beyond that, I'm not really sure of the plot. Someone is following ■ lady named Suzee Queue through time. The time traveler's time machine crashes in ■ forest. Then it's in 1930. Then it's in the water. This is fun. At some level, you can probably just rock out to the riffs and lose yourself in the fuzz. The music is strong enough on its own. But really, this is "Hang on gang, let's pause this game of Dungeons & Dragons and read the lyric sheet together because this merits further study" music. This is "Let's spin it again," fuzzed-out, fantasy rock. Get into it. —MP Johnson (Self-released, bwakdwagon.bandcamp.com)

CAPITALIST  *Brand Damage: LP*
Energetic, hyper-melodic pop punk in the vein of a lot of '90s Lookout! Records material, sort of Mr. T Experience meets Dillinger Four meets extremely contemporary cultural references. The lyrics are about as cheesy  the music is catchy, with  than a few clunky political declarations—one tongue-in-cheek hook hinges on the phrase “We’re gonna redistribute all your wealth”—but it lends itself to a dorky sweetness that makes it forgivable.

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There are even a few pretty good lyrical payoffs, including "Some kid started a kickstarter to make potato salad / and raised over 50,000 bucks / this world is invalid." As a bonus, there are samples from a Donald Trump speech as well as from that unfortunate Miss South Carolina video from, like, ten years ago. I'm a sucker for a good punk organ part, so "Decent Proposal" is the smash hit of this record for me. Super tight, confidently "uncool" pop punk from a band that's nailing their very particular sound. —Indiana Laub (Brassneck / Eccentric Pop)

CARSICKNESS: 1979-1982: CD

Carsickness was a band active in Pittsburgh roughly from 1979-'87. During the period identified in the title they released two full-lengths, three 45s, and have appeared on a number of comps. Dunno much about the particulars of this release, but it appears to be a collection of assorted tracks culled from their previous releases, along with some heretofore unreleased gems. There's a singular sound that developed over time, at first sounding like an egghead-but-blistering version of The Clash with saxes and creative time signatures, then later having echoes of prime Psychedelic Furs thrown in the mix, never losing their edge, creativity, or diminishing their passion in the process. Rock solid release throughout for the casual observer and a fitting homage for a band criminally overlooked in their heyday. —Jimmy Alvarado (Get Hip)

CAVES: *Always Why*: LP

Full-length corker from these indie punk shredders. Like a 360° fireworks display from the back of moving pickup truck. Sit back and let the summer night air blow your hair around while you enjoy the show that's happening way above your head. The guitar shoots up into the sky and explodes, the dual harmony vocals blast out in every direction descending in perfect unison. Crystalline and triumphant. Maybe the pickup truck/fireworks scenario sounds horrible to you. But whatever your happy place may be, this record is it. Put it on and go there. —Daryl (Dead Broke / Specialist Subject / Yo-Yo)

CF98: *Story Makers*: CD

CF98 is a long-running Polish pop punk band with non-accented, clean female vocals. We've all heard this many times before: speedy hits on the drums, occasional gang vocals, and melodic guitars. It's played competently and sounds good. They do a cover of Iggy's "Bleeding" that's not bad. Also, their song "90s," with references to music in the 1990s, was witty and well-played. There's not much new that's brought to the table here, though. —Kurt Morris (facebook.com/cf98music)

CHANNEL 3: *Put 'Em Up*: LP

New record from this long-running California band. Produced with precision by original Posh Boy producer Jay Lansford, he gives the band room to shine. The first two songs will get your blood pumping, then the

band shifts gears. The title track has a mid-tempo spaghetti western groove, driven along by Anthony Thompson's walking bass line. I'm catching a bit of Plimsouls style guitar in "She Never Wanted It This Way," courtesy of lead guitarist Kimm Gardener. Mike Magrann displays his skill with matching up melodies alongside sincere songwriting on "Not That It Matters." The speed picks up again on "Take Me to Your Leader," courtesy of new member Nick Manning on drums. I am a fan of albums that offer some dynamics from end to end. You have that here, along with the usual barn burners. Get this on vinyl so you can use the included stencil on your office bathroom wall. Your boss will thank you. —Sean Koeppenick (TKO)

CHINCHEES, THE: *Self-titled*: LP

Was admittedly a bit off put by the cover—a pic of what I'm guessing is the band running from a giant, smiling, purple circle—but ultimately glad I took the chance on it. A reissue of their self-released debut, it offers smart lo-fi pop in the vein of [insert the name of your fave poppy punk band with a large percentage of its members hailing from Denton, Texas], with blown-out sound quality and insidious hooks aplenty. Best of all, it gets better with subsequent spins. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dirt Cult)

CITY MOUSE: *Get Right*: CD

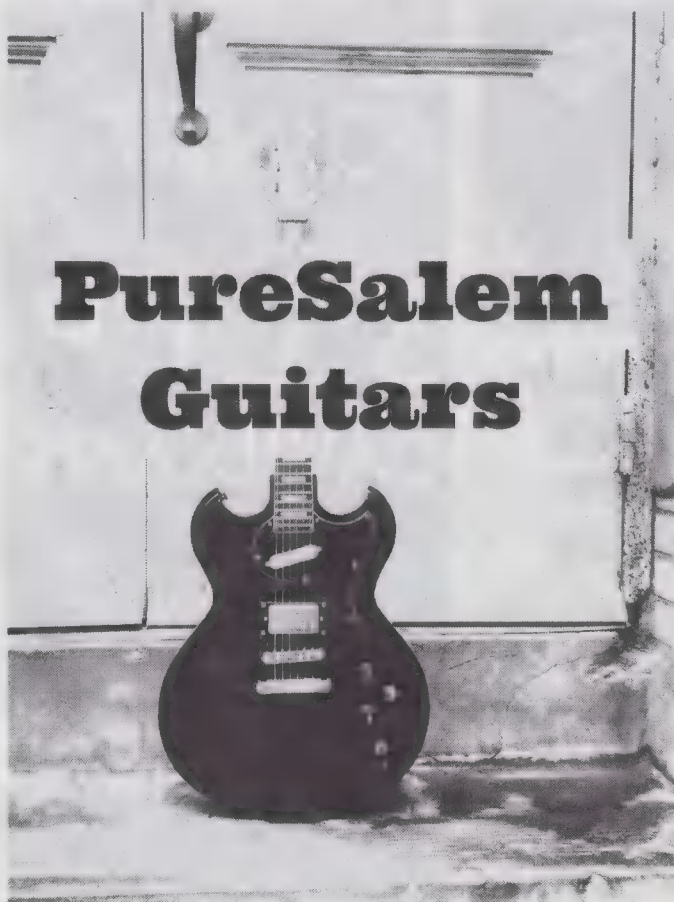
Has your heart ever latched onto a band so hard, so fast, and at just the

right moment in your life, that you knew you would carry the music with you until the day your heart stopped beating? City Mouse first came to me at one of the biggest turning points in my life. I didn't think I was even open to their brand of punk—poppier, more melodic than the tough guy hardcore I had buried myself in. But soon the needle hit the groove of that self-titled 7", I was left desperately grabbing for the lyric sheet because this band was singing what I was feeling. I was hooked, but it was just that one 7". Some splits and stuff followed, but no full-length. Until now. Coincidentally, I'm at another turning point, and I find myself simultaneously loved more than ever, yet more alone than ever. I don't even know how to say how much this record means to me right now. I've been listening to it over and over, just letting myself feel these words, these emotions. The lyrics perfectly personalize universals like heartbreak and self-doubt and hope for the future. It's honest. It's warm. It makes me feel like I'm not alone. —MP Johnson (It's Alive)

COBRA MAN

New Driveway Soundtrack: LP

Disco and synth pop have a bad rep. I often recommend the book *Hot Stuff: Disco and the Remaking of American Culture*. It's a very fluid and revealing book about the disco era and how racism, sexism, and homophobia informed people's view of disco. It's helped me find value in some of the records I see regularly in dollar



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bins. There was ■ almost punk-style struggle dance and funk artists endured just to get their records made and heard before disco exploded. The aftermath of *Saturday Night Fever* (1977) reminded ■ a little of when Green Day got big. But there are way more bad disco records than good ones. I don't think I'm ■ good judge of what's good except when I hear something I like. This album is derivative of disco and synth pop that shows some merit. It's a fun listen. I can't tell how serious it is, so I'm just going to describe what ■ of these songs evoked. "Magic Hour" teeters between Bee Gees and the better half of The Pet Shop Boys. "Fistfight at the Stoplight" sounds like ■ low-quality Blaxploitation soundtrack. "Weekend Special" could be played during the credits of a lost, low-grade '80s movie about a teenage road trip. "New Driveway" is an inexplicable rumination on getting a new driveway. It's more listenable than jokier bands like this and the hooks are often good. If you're into this sort of thing, it's high quality. —Billups Allen (Goner)

COCKTAILS: *Hypochondriac*: LP

I've heard ■ lot of bands mixing garage rock or garage punk with '70s power pop influences lately, but San Francisco's Cocktails take the straight, unadulterated power pop approach, as there's little punk or garage influence to be found here. I generally love most of this old power pop stuff when it's done well, but where Cocktails are concerned, I just wish it had a little

more... bite. Unfortunately for me, "bite" isn't really the sound that ■ "by-the-books" power pop band is really looking for. I can hear influence here from some '70s power pop pioneers like Shoes ■ well as '90s fuzz pop disciples like Teenage Fanclub or maybe even Supergrass, and they seem to be well versed in crafting tuneful pop songs, but leaves me ■ bit unfulfilled as someone who likes a little more punk in his pop. —Mark Twistworthy (Alien Snatch, aliensnatch.com)

COLOUR BÜK: *Cosmic Nightmare*: LP

Dissonant noise rock, at times not unlike mid-era Sonic Youth, at others sorta like Brainbombs without the lyrical virulence. Could probably use ■ bit more edge considering the amount of racket they're aiming for, but not bad at all as-is. —Jimmy Alvarado (Wir Wollen Wulle)

CONDOR: ■ Single #1: CS

One man band (for those who keep up with these things, it's the drummer of Rixe and the guy who does Digital Octopus) doing early French punk/oi (points of reference include Reich Orgasm, Kidnap, Robert et les Enfants Sauvages, Drei Oklok, and a lot of other bands you're not going to look up). Honestly, the first time I heard about this—speaking as ■ nerd about the Chaos Productions catalog—I didn't have my hopes up and I was very happy to be proven wrong, as I'd put this recording up against any of the Rixe 7"s. Sharp bass lines, interesting guitar

work, clever vocal phrasing, and those driving drums that you'd recognize from Rixe. This recording especially works because even though it has a vintage sound and could easily be mistaken for a release from '82-'84, it isn't ■ direct copy of anything, ■ it stands in its own right. —Ian Wise (Self-released)

CONFLICT: *Conclusion*: LP

Long-running U.K. anarcho punks Conflict hardly need an introduction. This is a reissue of their 1993 album which saw the band incorporating keyboards, synths, horns, and even some ska and death rock influences. While their previous albums *It's Time to See Who's Who* and *Increase the Pressure* were much more rooted in hardcore punk, *Conclusion* offers a more challenging listen with songs clocking in at over nine minutes, with spoken word and operatic song structures. It's probably not what I would ever recommend as ■ go-to or classic (their previously mentioned first two records are where I'd start with) but twenty-four years later, this album still stands the test of time and holds up about ■ well as anything that came out that year. The unlisted final song is perhaps the band at its most ferocious and worth the price of admission alone. —Juan Espinosa (PHR, phr.cz)

CONIFEROUS: *Self-titled*: CS

What if you took the band Lightning Bolt and gave them so many drugs that they couldn't play as fast as they normally do? That's the question that

the "broken vinyl player as an aesthetic ideal" band Coniferous seeks to answer. The results are mostly listening to noisy distorted guitars speed up and down, with loud math rock drums in there as well. Oh, actually, apparently none of those sounds are guitars. It's a man singing the notes through a distorted microphone. It comes off sounding like a bass, but it does have ■ sort of off-key humming sound of ■ exhausted drummer singing into a microphone. As an experiment, it's neat. As music, it's a chore. Every handful of minutes delivers ■ slice of a better song, a riff, or some motif that seems like it could to something, before drifting back to strange tones and hums. —Bryan Static (Self Sabotage)

CORNER BOYS: *Just Don't Care*: 7"

The three bands that came to mind when I first heard this Vancouver band were The Stone Roses, Buzzcocks, and Half Man Half Biscuit. Admittedly, it's only the lead hook of the first track which provides me with The Stone Roses comparison, so everything else is ■ frothy Half Man Half Buzzcock blend culminating in the joyous "Joke of the Neighbourhood." —Rich Cocksedge (Drunken Sailor)

COWBOY, THE: *The Cowboy*: LP

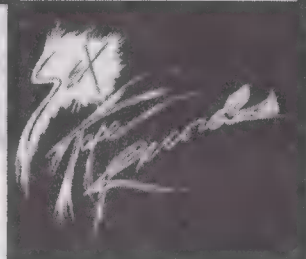
It's a brave move to release albums by The Cowboy and The Cowboys within a short space of time, so I take my hat off to the bravery of Drunken Sailor's marketing department for doing just that. The Cowboy includes members



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COWBOYS, THE: Volume 4: LP

Not to be mistaken for the band The Cowboy also with a current release on Drunken Sailor. Having listened to this half a dozen times I'm still scratching my head trying to find the right path to take with this review. The Cowboys doesn't follow one path and *Volume 4* is a record which offers up gems of varied retro styles. Currently, I have the crooning "Pseudomasochism" coming through my headphones but I know this will switch to the '60s-inspired rock of "I Feel Therefore I Am" shortly. You have to hear this for yourself to understand what is going on. It's a glorious record, it really is. —Rich Cocksedge (Drunken Sailor)

CRAVATS, THE: *Drum of Sound*: CD

After a few warm up singles to get their groove back on, these "neo-Dadaist" stalwarts of the anarcho punk scene unleash their first album in several decades. The manic paced free-for-alls of their early '80s output have largely been slowed down quite a bit, but they still maintain much of the tension, dissonant jazz noodling streak, and astute lyrical content that made 'em stand out in the first place and makes listening to them still

such a hoot. Nice return to the fray here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Overground, overgroundrecords.co.uk)

CREEPING TERRORS, THE:

***Evil Witch Bitch*: LP**

The Creeping Terrors exist somewhere in a godforsaken, echoing void between deathrock, horror punk, and post-punk. Something like 45 Grave with more drum machines. The usual ghoulish topics—necrophilia, knife-wielding maniacs, dark sex magic—make an appearance within the first minute, but there's more to the lyrical content than blood and guts. Unlike a lot of graverobbing bands I've heard, this English/Italian/Finnish duo's feminist, anti-colonialist politics are front-and-center (see: "The Fascist Monster Must Die" and "A Dick with an Itch"). Refreshing to hear something truly subversive in horror punk every once in a while; this is campy, creepy-crawly punk rock steeped in the horrifying reality we're living in now. —Indiana Laub (Self-released, thecreepingterrors@gmail.com)

CROM: *Hai Sumerian Nights*: CS

If Wu-Tang Clan made a doom-death-thrash metal album, it might sound like this and it, like this, would fucking rule. Twenty-second metal songs with over-the-top violent titles, mixed with brutal power riffs, and excerpts from Conan movies equals a real-fucking-fun experience for this listener! Crom has been around long enough to have a trailer for a documentary on Vimeo,

and an *LA Weekly* article dedicated to their underground cult status, but they are brand new to me and I like it. I like it a lot. All hail Crom! —Jon Mule (Snow Goat / To Live A Lie)

DAME: Self-titled: 7"

Dame are an all-woman five-piece from Boston who send their reverb in two directions: surfy Go-Go's new wave and foreboding Joy Division post-punk. This three-song EP builds on the promise of their demo, with faster, tighter, dynamic songs and lyrics about social disconnection. The result is big, dark, and well thought out with plenty of personality and punk rawness. The cover art's awesome, too, so don't just stream this. —Chris Terry (charmschoolrecords.bigcartel.com)

DARK THOUGHTS: Self-titled: CS

"Is this the Ramones?" My partner doesn't typically hang around during review time, but her assessment is not far off. Jim's harmonies and the tight snap of the snare land the tunes squarely in the Forrest Hills bruddas' territory. However, the guitar and bass, coupled with the short attention span song lengths, have enough chutzpah to walk the same line as Copyrights or Methadones' bombast. Blue cassette and foldout lyrics/cover. Recommended. —Matt Seward (Get Better)

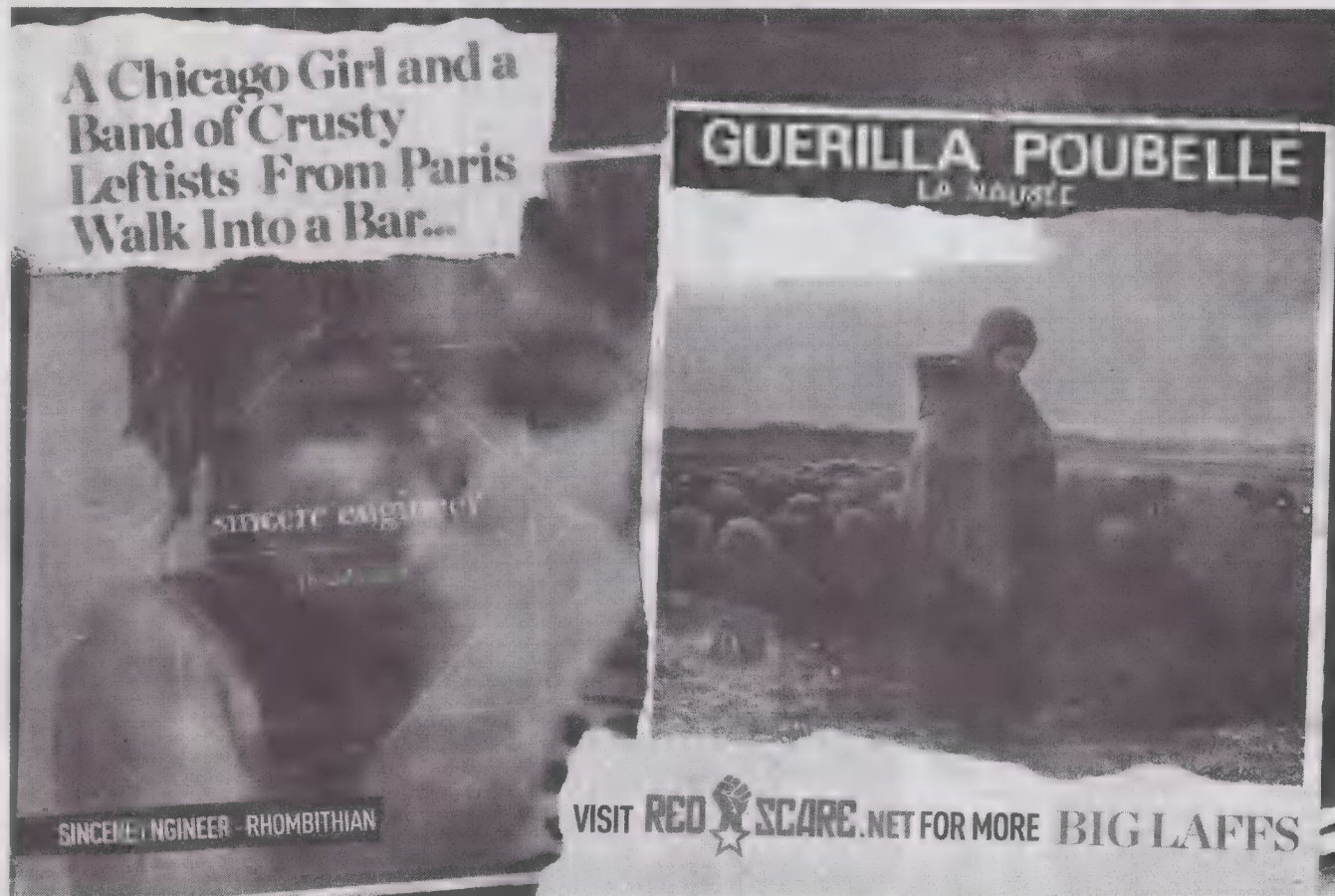
DARK/LIGHT: *Kill Some Time*: LP

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about what happens inside people's heads when their hometown where they

developed as a human changes to something else. Specifically about gang members in the streets of Los Angeles. What happens when the streets that were once rough as hell, now house dog salons and "mixologists." What happens when the town that you identify with no longer becomes identifiable? Like most major U.S. cities, Portland, Ore. has seen a similar transformation towards bougie, pretentious bullshit, but what has happened inside the heads of the punks who have been there for decades? How does one explain the cognitive dissonance experienced when you step outside to an unregulated, yuppie paradise, but "Doom Town" is still what's playing in your head? Evidently you record an album like *Kill Some Time*. It's dark and looming, pissed-the-fuck-off, howling at the moon like a maniac. Carrying on the spirit of nonconforming, anti-social pillars of PDX punk like Sado-Nation and The Rats. It's visceral and cathartic. Back home in L.A., the intersection that inspired "Holly-west Crisis" may be a Petsmart now, but we didn't go anywhere. Dark/Light understands, "I need to stop this bus / I need to get off this train / I wanna break up with today." —Daryl (Dirt Cult)

DARK/LIGHT: *Tigers*: EP

It's been a long time since I was nearly knocked on my ass from sheer surprise by a mystery record. Dark/Light are a Portland-based band who sound like they're heavily influenced by early L.A. stuff like Suburban Lawns,



Germes, Bags, and '80s TSOL. Their songs are dark and driving, with well-written melodic parts that complement steady hardcore, made slightly freaky with cool, springy riffage. I was legit sad when I flipped the record and it was a blank side, but the "Posers fuck off" label is worth the laugh. This EP is really fucking cool, highly recommend. —Candace Hansen (Jonny Cat)

DAVID DONDERO:
Inside the Cat's Eye: LP

More than a dozen releases into David Dondero's career, *Inside the Cat's Eye* finds him more subdued than ever, with scarcely a distorted note to be found. This is a musician who, paradoxically, may be nearly as famous now for flying under the mainstream radar as he is for his actual music. It's a bit of a tired narrative, but it's easy enough to see how Dondero achieved his status as an indie folk "songwriter's songwriter." He can repeat a simple, stripped-down hook until it expands into something more, from the mournful "Capitol Buildings Bleed" and pedal steel-soaked "Bacon, Eggs & Beer" to the rudimentary plucking of "All My Love," the unceremonious closer. *Inside the Cat's Eye* is sparse and reflective and a little uncomfortable—territory that should be intimately familiar to anyone who's been following David Dondero's music over the years. —Indiana Laub (Koschke, koschkerecords.com)

DEAD BARS: *Dream Gig: CD*

It's almost not even fair for me to write this review. I've Dead Bars

countless times, interviewed them for another magazine, and consider them my buddies. But what makes it okay for me is that anyone who knows of this band could easily say the same. I just happen to live in the city as them and get spoiled by the amount of shows they play. Here's the thing; no one in current punk sings like John Maiello. No one. His ability to be snotty, melodic, gritty, sweet, and sometimes off key all in the same song is captivating. At a glance, it's a lot like what the Ramones did—make something impossible to duplicate look so simple and attainable. Behind Maiello are these wonderful piercing guitar leads mixed with strong riffs and dancey drums and bass. This is the group's first full length and I can tell you from seeing a lot of these songs live before *Dream Gig* came out that they captured the live feeling of them perfectly. The twinkly piano solo that kicks the record off and the horns at the end were a nice surprise though. I love Dead Bars. Buy their records. —Kayla Greet (No Idea / Eager Beaver)

DEHUMANIZERS, THE: *Fresh Corn and Premium Bananas: CDEP*

Seattle's Dehumanizers are funny, strange, and jokey. Their mid-paced songs dabble in psychedelia and are intended to be simultaneously obnoxious and driving. I think I get it, and I think I kind of like it. They're probably more impactful live than recorded, but they've developed quite the following. Interesting societal jabs

are taken, and the musical mishmash is generally effective. As endorsable as any out-there farce group, I suppose. —Art Ettinger (PIG)

DERBE LEBOWSKI: Self-titled: LP

This album from Berlin, Germany fucking rules! Let's start with the opening track, "Moloch." A doomy guitar riff and drums fight for speaker time with a pounding bass line and some shrieking guitar feedback. I'm intrigued. After a voice from hell growls out a couple lines, Allen Ginsberg can be heard reciting from his 1956 masterpiece of a poem, *Howl*. Then there are blast beats, the floor has fallen out from underneath my feet, and I am thrashing and writhing about my kitchen. What was a death-doom track is now aggro-hardcore punk and my world is shattered. I cannot wait to get to the rest of the album, where I discover that every song is equally unpredictable and heavy, heavy, heavy. A quick search online and I'm pleased to discover that Derbe Lebowski have at least four other releases dating back to 2012. I will be getting familiar with them all in the near future. —Jon Mule (Spastic Fantastic, spasticfantastic.de / Dead Heroes, deadheroes.cz)

DIMBER: *Demo 1994-95: CS*

Dimber is a four-piece, catchy pop punkish band from L.A. Their demo boasts some Jawbreaker and Damned vibes, and in addition to seven well-written originals, it has a really sweet cover of "3 Small Words"

from the *Josie and the Pussy Cats* soundtrack. This demo rips. —Candace Hansen (dimber.bandcamp.com)

DIVIDED/HEAVEN: *Pacific Avenue: CD*

Freaking ugh. Singer/songwriter's "band" specializing in songs that could/should be licensed out to nighttime teen dramas on the Fox network. Said singer/songwriter notes the songs were written in a journal he got from friends, which reminds him of his time writing songs in Berlin. Although some songs were given away to other bands (manna from heaven?) and some were on Divided Sky's first album, some are also representing the sound of his new home, Los Angeles. This whole affair feels so inauthentic I can't even objectively listen to it. —Garrett Barnwell (This Is LA)

DOMESTICS, THE:

Cherry Blossom Life: LP

The Domestics play hardcore and street punk out of Suffolk, England. The gang vocals and unrelentingly fast instrumentation create a real urgency in the recordings. Every track pulls in and the inner sleeve contains a message that just about any reader of *Razercake* should be able to get behind: "Stay punk. Stay D.I.Y. Nazi punks, fuck off." —Jon Mule (TNS / Kangaroo)

DOMESTICS, THE:

Pissing on Perfection: 7"

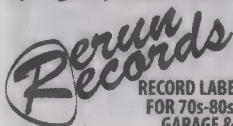
Seeing this seems to be a split between no less than six labels, I'm not sure this six-track was worth that

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much effort. This is a record containing all cover songs, all influential to the band, according to the liner notes. Further, the band notes the songs are all throwaways not to be taken seriously. If that is how they feel, why should I feel any differently? Granted, none of these covers is bad, just rendered pointless by band itself. Also noted, this 7" has got to have the worst cover art I can remember ever seeing. —Garrett Barnwell (TNS, tnsrecords.co.uk)

DREAM PROBE: *Demo II*: CD

Dekalb, Ill. hardcore punk that reminds me of the reverby Void-worship bands of a few years ago (Raw Nerve, Hunted Down, et cetera) in recording style but I'll take it because these riffs are sick and this band has figured out that you can slow down when it makes the song better. There are even some mosh parts (!!!) that are perfectly placed and executed. The thing I like most about this is that each song has its own style and feel, which is hard to do with this kind of hardcore. Definitely a band to watch out for. —Ian Wise (Prescience Tapes, dreamprobe.bandcamp.com)

DREAM PROBE: *Demo II*: CD

Everybody's favorite Champaign, Ill.-based anti-colonial hardcore rippers are back at it again with their second release in 2017. *Demo II* is more exciting than their first demo. Their songs are more dynamic and developed but still nervously push listeners to get to the heart of the matter through barreling syncopated breaks of thunderous

hardcore and classic, straight-ahead, grating punk. Highly recommend. —Candace Hansen (Prescience Tapes, dreamprobe.bandcamp.com)

EFFECTS, THE: *Eyes to the Light*: LP

Dischord has always been a label of ebbs and flows, of narrative threads followed from band to band. Since the late '90s, Devin Ocampo has been leaving a thick but unhyped strand in the label's pastiche, first with art weirdoes Smart Went Crazy, then Faraquet and Medications (whose lone LP *Completely Removed* is one of my fave releases from the label—yeah, I said it). Now Ocampo's at the helm of the Effects, who continue the incessant progression he's charted through twenty years (!) of Dischord releases. *Eyes to the Light* is an intricate and cerebral record, with enough math for a freshman semester of Gen Eds. With that said, this isn't a band counting to thirteen for the sake of it. Rather, The Effects pull off the trick of using mathy passages to form and accentuate melody throughout, skittering through as much as around, taking songs to sometimes unexpected places through similar means. Plus, you know, they kick serious ass. —Michael T. Fournier (Dischord)

EPIC PROBLEM: *False Hopes*: 7" EP

Epic Problem is back with four more tracks to get me reaching for my air guitars (rhythm and lead) in readiness to accompany the band in making its thick, melodic sound. There are

no real surprises here as the band set out its stall a few years ago and has continued to deliver its punchy punk rock via a handful of singles to great effect. There is a cover song featured in which Epic Problem add power and speed to The GC5's "After All," totally outdoing the original on all fronts. —Rich Cocksedge (Brassneck)

EXITHIPIES: *Dance Maniac*: 12" EP

It's as though Exithippies personally offended by the idea of genres, which in 2017 is nothing short of admirable. Coming from a noisecore/raw punk background, what I'm reviewing here is a lo-fi house record. Demented at times, but for the most part these grooves offer danceable club beats. I like to think that there is no such thing as a bad genre, so I always welcome the idea of punks exploring other sounds. Not sure what techno aficionados would think of this, but I think it's awesome. When your heart tires of distortion and blastbeats, but you don't want to take your crust pants off just yet, see what Exithippies are up to. —Daryl (SPHC)

EXIT-STANCE:

While Backs Are Turned: LP

A reissue of these anarcho punks' rare 1985 EP. Pals of Conflict, their sound straddles the space between them and, say, the Subhumans' slower moments—simple, repetitive riffs, tribal drumming, and angry vocals taking on animal rights, vivisection, nuclear war, and so on. It's true to its time, yet still maddeningly all too

relevant. A-side features the original tracks, and the B-side is all bonus tracks—some from their *Crimes Against Humanity* EP, and some I can't quite place that I'm guessing are either comp tracks or previously unreleased demo cuts. Recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (PHR, phr.cz)

EXPLODING HEAD SYNDROME:

Crashes Down: CD

This music is really complicated in its simplicity. In a way, it sounds like the sort of thing that Victory Records would have put out when Victory Records was still fun—Snapcase-y yelling and drumming that seems intent on just crushing the set to oblivion. But it also oozes '90s-style melodic punk rock, with big singalong choruses and overly melodramatic lyrics that you can't help but hear and think, "Yeah! That's right! 'I'm gonna fight you 'til the sanity's restored!'" It just works really well and is built for the repeat button. —MP Johnson (WormHoleDeath)

FAT DUKES OF FUCK, THE:

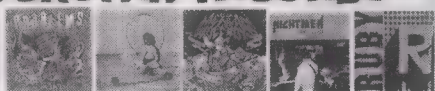
A Compendium of Desperation, Morality and Dick Jokes: LP

There seems to be a trend in underground music currently where there's an increased emphasis on loud and ugly rock, from more traditional noise rock to experimental metal and everything in between. This record fits into part of that, somewhere. There are contributions from noise rock royalty, including members of The Melvins and Jesus Lizard (including



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the cover art by David Yow) that will certainly pique some interest from fans, but, musically, this sits ■ more of ■ weird, experimental, non-serious, non-pretentious metal record... but not enough in a good way. The packaging (despite the famous howler behind the cover art) is seemingly intentionally ugly, their name is absolutely cringe-worthy, and the record title is questionable, all things that fit right into the predictable noise rock aesthetic. There are *parts* of songs here that I like, some heavy riffing and interesting other bits, but on the whole I really couldn't find much here to sink my teeth into. Despite loving many bands that fit under the noise rock stable, this strays too far from the things I like about this scene. —Mark Twistworthy (thefatdukesoffuck.bandcamp.com)

FIFTEEN: *Extra Medium Kickball Star* (17): LP

Fifteen has always been super hit or miss with me. They've got some good songs and they've got some downright painful draggers. So someone found ■ bunch of copies of the original press of this LP in ■ garage or something, and they repackaged 'em in a new, two-color silkscreened cover. Hard to believe that Fifteen was already on their fourth LP by 1995, but such is the mercilessness of time and all that. What you need to know, if you don't already: ex-Crimpshrine, hoarse vocals, mostly mid-tempo, staunchly anti-authoritarian, sometimes veers painfully close to punk funk. Ends

with the song "Violation II," which is ■ five-minute-long, muddy folk tune that was apparently sent to the band from ■ few folks in Indiana. Weird-ass, momentum-killing way to close out ■ record. Some folks argue that if you've heard one Fifteen record, you've heard them all. What do you think? —Keith Rosson (Dead Broke)

FITNESS: *Puppet Show: 7"* EP

Props unto the band for extracting this much fidelity from that least propulsive of musical formats, the 7" 33. That said, I am having a spot of difficulty trying to draw ■ anal bead ■ what, precisely, these denim-clad ne'er-dowells ■ attempting to do to me on this record: They've got twin guitars howling together in calculated disunity like some manner of wet basement Thin Lizzy, the singer screams up large swaths of lung like a celestial Orkin ■ visiting armageddon upon Stink Bug Planet, but yet they have these goofy and seemingly meaningless song titles like "Pauly's Shore" and "Roseanne's Bar," somewhat defusing the Rock Gravitats that is presumably at the heart of the situation. I can't figure out if they're trying to be the second coming of AOD or angling for ■ mid-afternoon slot at Riot Fest. Decent but aesthetically perplexing. BEST SONG: "Pauly's Shore." BEST SONG TITLE: "Firebird," because I thought they meant the b-side to "Chevy Chewy." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: They thank both the '05 White Sox and '16 Cubs, so you know success

is their only motherfuckin' option. —Rev. Nørb (Don't Panic)

FLOWERS OF EVIL: *City of Fear: LP*

Punchy, deceptively simple punk that sounds like ■■■ long lost proto-hardcore band. There's a lot going on at the surface—snotty vocals over a band that recalls the harsher edges of the late '70s/early '80s punk rock on both coasts—but just underneath is another layer of odd chords and subtle drone leads that add texture and a broader palate than what might be noticed at first blush and saves 'em from sounding like a nostalgia act. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

FREAK GENES: *Playtime: LP*

If you distilled the late-'70s explosion of punk rock into ■ single mixtape that incorporated the pop side, the garage side, and the experimental noise side, Freak Genes would be that mixtape made flesh. It's a highlight reel of the genres' finest tricks, crafted into over a dozen tunes ranging the power pop to noise rock spectrum. If you know me at all, you know I like the pop tunes more than the out-there space jams, but neither is a bad look for Freak Genes. Even when they get wild in the songwriting department, they still make sure to pump out actual songs. I think my favorite part of this record is the half-assed guitar tone. Not that it sounds like it wasn't purposeful, but because of how weak the guitar sounds in contrast with the pounding music. These sentences typed out seem like

insults, but it serves to create a unique texture to the album that I'm fucking jazzed about. Must be heard to be believed. A good addition to the punk fan's vinyl collection. —Bryan Static (Alien Snatch!)

FROZEN TEENS: *Hey, Good Job: 12"* EP

Nice collection of punky power pop (or vice versa). The hooks are a bit more insidious than ■■■ would expect—and more subtle than saccharine—which'll give the proceedings ■ much longer shelf life. Which isn't to say it doesn't have some effective bits employed—the little stinger leads that pop up here and there are especially effective. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dead Broke)

FULL COUNTS, THE: *First Out: LP*

Hell yeah! These dudes fuckin' rule and they know it. With catchy hooks and gorgeous, melodic guitar, *First Out* is ■ fully realized, polished work of pure rock. If I had to nitpick, I'd say I wish the song order were different; ■ couple of times, one downtempo track bleeds directly into the next without breaking for something more upbeat. But aside from that, I really don't have any complaints. Would ■■■ hundred percent recommend to a friend. —Simone Carter (Phratry)

GAZM: *Dirty Beach: CS*

As a connoisseur of indecipherable grunts and groans, I almost passed out upon hearing "Wild Dogs," the final track ■ this all-too-brief tape. Each song leading up to it left me more

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and more impressed. This Montreal hardcore band is so perfectly manic. Every tune explodes with energy. There are some random "Ow!"s and "Ahhh!"s along the way, these perfect bursts of vocal percussion, but then the final song hits and it seems like words are barely even necessary to convey the foaming-at-the-mouth anger, so there are few. It's legendary. —MP Johnson (Not Dead Yet)

GENERATORS, THE: *Last of the Pariahs*: LP

Don't you hate it when your favorite albums aren't available on vinyl? Dr. Strange is right there with you, and they did the world a favor by finally giving this fantastic release the deluxe LP treatment. Formed from the ashes of the mighty Schleprock in 1997, The Generators define themselves with a false sense of simplicity in their unique take on melodic punk with a slight European pop influence. *Last of the Pariahs* is neither their newest album nor is it their best known. That doesn't make it any less essential, and Dr. Strange gets major props for unleashing this much-welcomed new version. —Art Ettinger (Dr. Strange)

GLARING, THE: *White Lie E.P.*: EP

The Glaring is intense political punk at its finest. Each of these three tracks is dripping with unrelenting aggression. Jessie spits every word through gritted teeth and pushes her vocal chords just shy of blowing them completely out. The Glaring blur the

lines between street punk, hardcore, and metal so well that it's hard to pick out elements of them at all. Straight out of the gate, they pummel their way through breakneck tempos and sharp leads. While their drummer keeps a pretty basic beat during the verses, he unleashes absolute brutality to the choruses and breakdowns. Their songs are largely about pressures of an unjust world and grappling with how to cope with a lack of control. In the first track Jessie screams, "A system designed to take everything from me / The harder that you try the less you can achieve," and it sadly rings true for me. Though I don't think their overall message is apathy—more like releasing a pressure valve before an imminent explosion. The last track, "White Lie," has some unexpected and interesting time signatures. They slow it down just a touch on this one and allow for a couple seconds of silence leading up to the chorus before sludging their way to the finish line of the record. They don't sound anything like any bands I've come across lately, and I think that's a good thing. Also the record was mastered by Kurt Bloch from The Fastbacks! —Kayla Greet (Self-released)

GLUE: *Self-titled*: 12" EP

The long standing tradition of quality punk and hardcore stemming from the depths of Austin, Texas (The Dicks, Big Boys, MDC, to name a few) can now chisel in a new name to its legacy: Glue. After a well received demo,

7", and countless mind blowing live performances the band has turned up the intensity dial in the form of six new songs of their uniquely frenzied take on modern hardcore punk that leaves you begging for more. Beads of sweat practically trickle onto your face in the form of sound waves blaring from your stereo speakers. You feel that? That's a band giving it their all yet giving zero fucks about who it does or doesn't please. I don't even care that they ripped off a Gastunk riff or two: this is another classic US hardcore record for the ages. —Juan Espinosa (Self-released)

GOOD GRIEF: *Self-titled*: 7"

Interesting sampling of influences here from this Las Vegas band. Sort of a desert-fried take on Midwestern power pop/pop punk. Sometimes it sounds like The Figgs, sometimes it sounds like The Spits covering Shark Pants, but four times slower. Yet, no matter the direction, I like where it's going. Devoid of pretention, you get the feeling that Good Grief just don't really give a shit, and that makes me care so much more. Here's to bands not trying to figure out a hyper-specific sound and just playing what ever the fuck they want. —Daryl (Desert Hospitality / National Southwestern, goodgriefnv@gmail.com)

GREENSLEEP: *Cheap Headphones*: LP

Straight outta the '90s, Greensleep is back with a second new release after an eighteen year breakup nap.

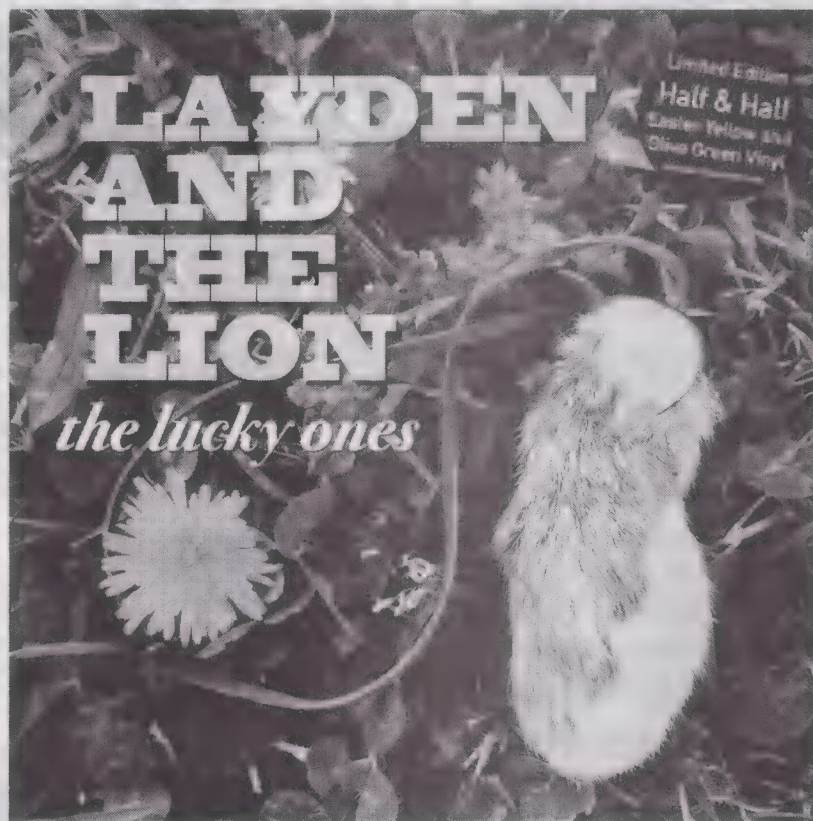
Superchunk-bounce riff attacks ("Don't Wanna Know") and chug-alongs ("Cheap Headphones"), Paul Weller jingle-jangles and pop explosions ("Adrift!", "Pillar to Post"), slide right on like a pair of well-worn corduroy cut-offs. Excellent caliber "barrel aged indie rock" making its way in to immediate, uncontrollable singalongs and multiple rotations. Highly recommended. —Matt Seward (Dead Broke, deadbrokerecords.com)

HANGING JUDGE: *Hang 'Em High*: 7"

What is happening here is some GMM Records-style street punk/oi featuring ex-members of Adolf And The Piss Artists. The opening song, "Pawns," is political in nature and tears into both the left and right wing. This is exactly the kinda thing that Bruce Roehrs would have spent half his column raving about in *MRR* way back when. —Mike Frame (Crowd Control)

HATERS: *Chronic*: 7"

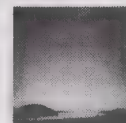
Do you ever fall into a nostalgia hole and find yourself listening to Letters To Cleo and the stuff that will have to do once you've run out of Letters To Cleo? Me neither but if I did, this would definitely be one of the few contemporary bands I would sneak into that playlist. If it existed. Haters hail from Brighton and their sound is all power indie pop with a hint of punk, but the feelings and thoughts are all sad sack (no judgment). As always, I appreciate a woman on vocals and audible bass so I say this one is worth



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■ listen. There ■ only four songs, try them all. —Nicole X (Everything Sucks Music, everythingssucksmusic.com)

HEROES ■ VILLAINS: **Heroes & Villains II: LP**

There seem to be several bands called Heroes & Villains. This album is on their record label's Bandcamp and their record label has a website, but there is little information about this particular H & V. This is their "lost" second album according to the website. It's funny a band that's already hard to identify has a "lost" second record. By internet standards, the band is "lost." But it's a very good, over-distorted shoegazing album with a hint of psych structure. Their sound seems influenced by Jesus And Mary Chain. The guitars are particularly perfect with their slow strumming and hypnotic distortion. There ■ loads of bad bands like this, but this one is well recorded with solid songs and hints at being a pretty good "lost" band. —Billups Allen (Lo & Behold, lo-behold.org)

HEX, THE: "St. James Infirmary" b/w "Daydream Deceiver": 7"

I ■ happy to report that there are some different and interesting things happening in my town (Victoria, BC) these days. The Hex is ■ band I have ■ play ■ couple of times and each time I came away feeling like I had witnessed something special. This recording confirms it for me. The first song is a burning blues swagger with a few spastic explosions throughout.

■ kept thinking of hints of Gun Club with a healthy dose of Pine Hill Haints. Cool and hypnotic. The flip side took ■ back to what I remember from seeing them live. There is still a bit of Gun Club happening there, but this time it's going full throttle and focused through some sun-drenched hallucinogenic prism that I couldn't not think of Lenguas Largas (in fact, this was a comparison that I drunkenly made to the frontman of the band after the first time I saw them. Later he told me he checked out Lenguas Largas and could hear what I was saying). I love this band and intend to see them play as much ■ possible. —Ty Stranglehold (Northern Gothic)

HEXHAMMER: Self-titled: LP

If you saw this record cover and thought, "I bet this sounds like Venom," you wouldn't be wrong, but it's more than that. Take that primitive thrashy metal, add equal parts crusty punk and Motörhead rock'n'roll swagger, and you get Hexhammer, the Finnish brethren of Inpsy and Midnight. Fuck yes! —Chad Williams (Filthy Rat)

HIGLEY: Self-titled: LP

Bands like Higley went over my head ■ a teen. I could hear the heart behind bands like ALL, but gravitated to the sugary anger and fart jokes of Descendents. But hit that early twenties stride and you start wishing you had been to one to figure out writing and playing pop with the depth and passion that related to becoming an adult

■ well ■ ALL did then and Higley do now. Over ■ eight year process, we're lucky that Kevin Carl stayed the course, enlisting multiple bassists, drummers (including Bill Stevenson), and waiting until the last minute to find the perfect vocalist in James from River City High. Love songs for folks with mortgages. Just perfect. —Matt Seward (Wallride)

HONEY JOY: Self-titled: LP

This debut full-length from London-based five-piece is catchy and fun. The production quality isn't great, but I think that's actually part of the appeal. It's like a mix between melodic, riff-driven stuff like Cross My Heart and poppier '90s-inspired guilty pleasures like Letters To Cleo. If it was faster and tighter, it would be ■ dead ringer for LPIII-era Soviettes, which I ended up listening to anyway. The split black and clear vinyl is a definite bonus though. I'm a sucker for cool vinyl. —Theresa W. (Everything Sucks Music)

ILLYA: In Adversity...: 7"

Japanese shred-fest thrash. The vocals remind ■ of fingernails moving slowly down a chalkboard. "The Polar Star" could be a Queensrÿche song. I couldn't make this work for me, but maybe others can turn the tide. —Sean Koepenick (SPHC)

IN FLUX: No More Macho Bullshit: CS

Portland, Ore.-based In Flux are making some seriously pissed-off and relatable jams for pissed-off people

working through ■■■■ shit. When vocalist Shai screams "nobody's perfect, but I think we should have each others fucking backs" at the end of "Skin Break" just before the tape drops into ■ chuggy new jam, it made me reflect ■ personal experience and the political moment while also resisting a bodily urge to head bang. If that's not good hardcore, I don't know what is. —Candace Hansen (Get Better)

INTERCISION: ■■■■

Intercision makes fast, brutal hardcore with ■ explicitly political bent. The tape even comes with a poster that says "ICE FUCK OFF" that doubles ■ a lyrics sheet. The songs rail against settler colonialism, Nazis, global warming, fascism, Trump, social media, white supremacy, petty Left infighting, and the very existence of the state. It is an extremely righteous tape, in the sense that it eviscerates its targets with unbridled sonic rage, and rightly so. —Lyle (Self-released, facebook.com/intercision)

JIM AND THE FRENCH VANILLA:

Abroad ■ the House: LP

A cursory listen will identify this as ■ lo-fi garage endeavor, and it is indeed this—simple, repetitive tunes, blown-out sound, and such. As with the best of things, though, the devil is in the details. Jim Blaha and his band of cohorts cram all sorts of interesting ideas into every inch of every song: drone-leads, an off-kilter melodicism, repetitive psychedelic touchstones,

LES THUGS

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Radical Hystery - LP

Still Hungry Still Angry - LP

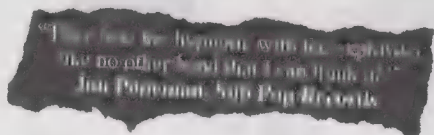
I.A.B.F. - LP

As Happy As Possible - 2xLP

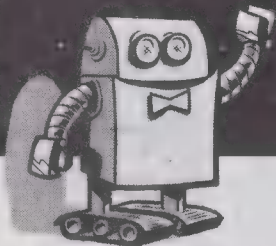
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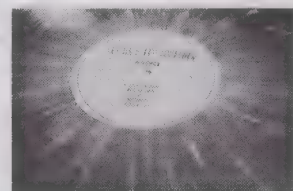
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and art-damage fused onto a spine that is poppy and catchy as fuck without being obviously so. Mighty impressive throughout, and creative in all the best ways. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dirtnap)

JUST BUSTED: Self-titled: CS

Precision punk—with rapid-fire vocals and super catchy hooks—Just Busted doesn't leave any room for want with their first release. Spensaur's vocals are highly distorted which is in juxtaposition with clean guitar and meticulous bass lines that gives it enough grit to round out their sound. Bay Area punk alums from Wild Assumptions, Butanna, and Provoke bring together elements of hardcore, pop, and post-punk to create a clean, modern sound. This is a great recording that does their live shows justice. —Camylle Reynolds (Self-released)

KALIK: Disapproved: CD-R EP

Danish punk/hardcore with defiant lyrics and a vein of pop pumping throughout. The punkier tunes were the most interesting, mixing melody with stabs at being anthemic, but truth be told, they lost me by the ska song two songs into the trip. —Jimmy Alvarado (Kalik, facebook.com/kalikofficial)

KLIMAX: Ääri/Päät: LP

Finnish hardcore with an odd pop bent built in. At times they lob a curve ball into the mix—brief acoustic passage here and, wait... is that a string section?!—but, overall, the tunes hold their own quite well, usually strongest

when they aim for anthemic instead of tight 'n' zippy. —Jimmy Alvarado (Kämäset Levyt)

KÜKEN: Self-titled: LP

Formed by a set of German twins, previously responsible for power poppers The Kidnappers, Küken opts for a darker musical route compared to its predecessor. Although less pop, there is definitely more power and this brings about an edgier output for the trio. All of the dozen tracks clock in under the two-minute mark—with only one actually troubling that indicator—as tight, short songs form the modus operandi for the band. It's by no means a unique formula but it's expertly executed. —Rich Cocksedge (Drunken Sailor)

LAPÊCHE: The Second Arrow: LP

I've been waiting for this full length since the moment I heard the first song off their 2016 *Bright and Bending* EP. I'm torn between being sad that I'll never get to hear this again for the first time and being impatient at the idea of having to wait during the day for the chance to listen to it again. I legitimately snuck my office door shut to listen clandestinely. This LP shows that the earworm melodic qualities of that first release weren't an accident, but songs like "Don't Forget" and "Within the Structure" ease us into darker, more introspective territory. The lyricism on here is masterful, like post-punk Rosanne Cash or if Jawbox was fronted by Suzanne Vega. The

balance between brightness and depth that these folks achieve is something I will envy forever and I know already that this record will get me through serious shit. —Theresa W. (Bakery Outlet, bakeryoutletrecords.com)

LAZY CLASS: Pressure Rising: 7" EP

From Poland comes Lazy Class and their melodic oi, rife with the typical themes one expects but leaving the sound to tread where it wants. The opening track, "Pressure Rising," is begging to have a crowd yelling the chorus back at the band. As the record moves on to track two, "Before the Dawn," it's hard not to feel pleasantly jarred by the shift in tone—while not unnatural, it's a different sound that feels like an oi band opening for AFI. The final track, "Remote Control," is fast, fun, carries a good bass line, and clocks in as the shortest song on the record, which feels a little mean! Either way, three very oi songs that may convince those of us who aren't so into the usual offerings. —Nicole X (Spirit Of The Streets)

LES THUGS: Radical Hysteria: LP

Top notch reissue of this influential French band's 1986 debut LP. Dreary and driving mid-'80s punk like the cretinous offspring of *Something Better Change*-era D.O.A. and Squirrel Bait, or Really Red and the first Lazy Cowgirls LP. These eight tracks are full of twists and turns. Reckless and restless, the untamed howls of youth may come across as somber and

depressive, but these teeth are still clenched with agitpop hostility. The action is busting out of the grooves. —Daryl (Nineteen Something)

LES THUGS: 1986 LP

This is a 2017 vinyl reissue of Les Thugs' fantastic 1996, Steve Albini-produced album. While the downstroke-driven songs take me back to a certain '90s sound, I don't feel like this album is stuck in a time or place in the way that revisiting other '90s bands feels. The title track could fit on a Fugazi record and, for me, that's always a good thing. —Jon Mule (Nineteen Something, nineteensomething.fr / Pias, pias.com)

LIMP WRIST: Facades: LP

"Touching" is an atypical adjective for a hardcore record, but it's the one that keeps coming to mind while listening to queer punk legends Limp Wrist's new LP. The whole thing—from the eight songs of blazing old school hardcore on side A, to the trio of delightfully grotty electro punk tunes on the flip, to the entire lyric zine about queer outsiders—is dedicated to "rural queens, dykes, trans kids, and punk kids... who crave to be part of some dream community but can't." In English and Spanish, the lyrics rail against the assimilationist "gaystream," with the hope of building community for queer people who feel ostracized, not just by straight society, but by normie queers as well. The sentiment behind *Facades* reminds me of the pain and alienation I

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saw so many of my punk queer friends experience when we were younger, and I wish I could hop back twenty years and slip this record into their crates. Also, hey, this is excellent music. Limp Wrist are all punk veterans, featuring former members of Hail Mary, Devoid Of Faith, By The Throat and Kill the Man Who Questions, and fronted by Martin Sorrondeguy from Los Crudos. For the first eight songs, they pull from decades of hardcore music, writing righteously pissed-off, energizing songs. For the last three, they try something new (and succeed!): building songs around ■ dirty electro thump, resulting in an early industrial sound that cuts like a rusty blade. Limp Wrist ■ vital ■ ever. Get this record and, as they say, stay fucked and never go in. —Chris Terry (Lengua Armada)

LIQUIDS: *Hot Ligs*: LP

By dint of the minimalist cover and the song titles — “Dumb as Fuck,” “Piss on Me” and “Sick Shit” occur in a row—I assumed that these Indianans were the type who traded on pure snot and violence to the nervous system. And, whilst the aforementioned ingredients ■ by no means in short supply here, to dismiss these cads as pure snot-and-violence is to damn them with faint praise: *Hot Ligs* sounds like somebody put the Pagans, the Drakulas, Los Ass-Kissers, mid-period Rip Off Records, and the third Urinals single in a blender. AND THEN LEFT THE FUCKING BLENDER ON, ALL NIGHT LONG. This twelve-

inch, fourteen-song, 45 rpm rager is a goddamned adrenalin-blasted vortex of trouble for the squares, may I be done in by a flying chamber pot if this is not the case. Lots of records can take the paint off ■ wall, but *Hot Ligs* can clean used turpentine! *Can other records do this? Fuck no!* The secret behind this whirlwind din is likely that they know a little more about playing and songwriting than they let on, but, then again, that's completely speculative ■ my part, so why jinx them with an unnecessary effusion of florid praise? *Look to thy laurels, Solids! Take cover, Gases! Head for the hills, Aerosols! You poser states of matter have officially met your match!!* BEST SONG: Believe it or don't; it's the album-opening instrumental, “Howdy.” BEST SONG TITLE: “I Killed Donald Trump.” I mean, duh. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The back side of the lyric sheet is a drawing of about a million cats. —Rev. Nørð (Hip Kid, hipkidrecords.storenvy.com / Not Normal, notnormal.bigcartel.com)

LOST BALLOONS: *Hey Summer*: LP

Like I'm sure for many others, summer is my favorite time of year—Los Angeles heat notwithstanding, all the best, fun stuff happens. Each year the season starts off with the promise of good things in full bloom, promise that inevitably withers like leaves with the coming of fall. On their second album, Jeff Burke and Yusuke Okada turn down the furious freneticism that related bands like Marked Men have

made into ■ cottage industry, focus more on the “pop” that has always been there at the core, and effectively pen the quintessential late summer album. Like that time of season, it's rife with feelings of missed opportunities, loss, melancholy, and yet ■ wistful sense of hope. Emotion is packed into one gem after the next, seamlessly blending power pop with punk, dream pop with garage, keyboards with dabs of occasional country twang. If any of that description makes you uneasy, don't let it. This disc is gorgeous, and easily one of the best albums you're gonna come across this year. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dirtmap)

LOVE CANAL:

If It Ain't Broke, Break It: LP

I've long had ■ soft spot for Love Canal. It began when they closed out an '80s Olympic Auditorium show by giving out their share of the complimentary canned beer to the audience. A mad beer fight ensued and the band played until the house lights were turned up and the back doors were opened in ■ not-so-subtle “get the fuck out already” move. Cool as fuck, yes. What hooked me, though, were their tunes: zippy melodic thrash with all the O.C./South Bay trappings of the time married to Kerry's distinctive voice and infused with a lot of humor. Their long out-of-print *It's ■ Dog's Life So Blow It Out Yer Ass* LP was a hoot ■ well, where the intricacies of their sound, especially Arab's guitar runs, were in full evidence. This, their second album,

comes some thirty-two years after their first, with some inevitable changes in tow. Firstly, Kerry's replaced here by D.I.'s Bosco on vocals, which makes ■ significant change to the proceedings, though one not necessarily bad—he's ■ great singer with a strong voice. The tempos of the originals, re-recordings, and covers showcased here ■ much less frantic than they were back in their initial run—again not necessarily a bad thing—and Arab's distinctive noodling remains intact. A rhythm section comprised of former members of Plain Wrap, The Vandals, and Leatherwolf (!?) rounds things out nicely. They've also updated to a distinctly modern O.C./South Bay sound, which, unfortunately, includes a right-wing bent to ■ of the lyrics. A solid release overall, true to their roots, their sound, and oeuvre. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hostage)

LUNG LUST: *War at Home*: 7"

Boston crusty hardcore. Most of it sounds like Tragedy with some blast beats that veer a little more into black metal territory, and there are some cool dissonant guitar harmonies thrown in at the end of some of the riffs. It's heavy and driving, which is what you want in a record like this. —Ian Wise (Dead Tank, deadtankrecords.com)

MALA VISTA / CHARLIE'S STRIPE:

Split: CS

Two songs each from Brooklyn, New York's Mala Vista and Domodossola, Italy's Charlie's Stripe, and the sides complement each other nicely—both



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THIS FALL SNEAK PEAK: COOL NOISECORE 7" FROM BRAZIL, MALAYSIA, USA, UK

bands play an up-tempo, poppy rock'n'roll. Yet I wouldn't go so far ■ to call the sound ■ this pop punk, since the songs aren't ■ formulaic ■ that genre requires these days. The songs are catchy, vibrant, and fun the way that rock'n'roll is meant to be. Not many records make this old man want to dance, but this one sure did. Also comes with ■ download code. —The Lord Kveldulfr (What's For Breakfast?)

MAR: *Fill Your Lungs: CS*

This cassette from Providence two-piece Mar has been impossible for me to stay away from. It's loud, grimy, and haunting. It truly feels like some shit is getting worked out, turned inside out, and left to die. I would call it sludge, but there some parts that are so fast and beat-driven that that seems to be ■ unfair tease to lead with. With only six songs ranging from one to eight minutes, the vocals and guitars seem to be part of the ■ instrument, rusted and plunging forward in the dark. Also, these two do everything themselves from designing and printing the simple and striking cassette insert to hand-delivering it to my apartment in ■ box from a relatively fancy sex toy with a note apologizing that the box held the tape instead of said sex toy. So. —Theresa W. (Self-released)

ME AND MY KNIFE: *It'll Do: 7" EP*

Justin wrings notes from his guitar neck and produces Billy Childish-inspired chords sounding like tig welding seeping through his homemade speaker.

Coupled with the, often airborne, rumbling bass antics and snapping ■■ rolls of the rhythm section, Me And My Knife deliver blistering garage rock, not from a suburban outpost, but from an actual metal shop. If early Who had been released on Goner and came from the Pittsburgh of the South, you'd be somewhere in the Me And My Knife ballpark. 150 pressed on multicolored vinyl. Seek this out. —Matt Seward (After Birth, meandmyknife.bandcamp.com)

MEDICATION: *Warm Places: LP*

Medication was the last project that Dickie Hammond (founding guitarist of Leatherface) worked on before his death in 2015. Other members include Leatherface's Graeme Philliskirk and ■ trio of Sainte Catherines members. Considering I have—if not outright fevered adoration—at least ■ staunch respect for both bands, this should've been a home run. And believe me, it's good: there's Hugo Mudie's familiar rasp, that warm and familiar guitar tone we've loved for years. There might a little ferocity lost because this seems more of a studio side project than anything else, but if it's as close as we'll get to ■ new Sainte Catherines record, I'll take it. Closes out with "Stalingrad," presumably penned and sung by Hammond, and it's ■ morose and unflinching lamentation about a life full of missteps and mistakes. Pretty haunting way to close out the record. —Keith Rosson (Dead Broke)

MIK TROUBLE:

It's the Mick Trouble EP: 7"

Early '80s English punk pop, long thought lost to time... or is it? One view: label says Mick Trouble was an up-and-comer in the vein of Nick Lowe and Wreckless Eric, a favorite of John Peel, on the cusp of breaking through before simply disappearing. Years later, these recordings were discovered. Another view: "Mick Trouble" is actually ■ contemporary New York musician adept at mimicking the early '80s English sound. If so, job well done. Getting that guitar jangle/high end bass/snappy snare combo is no easy engineering feat, even if one has vintage equipment. Regardless of origin, all four songs on this EP are fantastic. "Shut Your Bleeding Gob You Git" is tops for me, with its sneering, driving delivery and Ramones-like vocal harmonies. Label Emotional Response was unknown to me, but I see they're the ones who put out the *Typical Girls* comps I've been looking for (I think... can't find my want list since I moved.) The rest of their catalog deserves some attention, too. A sleeper label, for sure. If I may quibble, I would have made side two the lead, but I can do that in my own home, can't I? Since getting this record, I've gone back and forth on which origin story I believe. Currently, I'm leaning towards the "fake" version. The evidence swaying me that way is that label press says this EP is from 1980, but the record sleeve says it was recorded in 1983. Game well played! —Sal Lucci (Emotional Response)

MOON BLOOD: *Cramp: CS*

Las Vegas's Moon Blood trades in that most beloved feminist trope: the aestheticization of period blood. But more than that, they make thrashy and furious femme punk songs that ■ mostly under ■ minute long. The vocals vacillate between growling rasps and lilting screams, a little reminiscent of La Misma. It rules and I want to hear more from them immediately. —Lyle (Self-released, moonbloodlv.bandcamp.com)

MOPE GROOVES: *Joy: LP*

Some songs are quiet singer/songwriter types with soft vocals and acoustic guitar. Others are pretty pop jams with some solid hooks. But then there are songs like "New Car" that come out swinging with a power pop sound that'd be right at home next to the Marked Men on ■ mixtape. The band sort of dances around styles while providing tunes for you to do the same. All the songs have a sense of sweetness to them—not quite saccharine, but like a story told by your best friend shrouded in a crocheted blanket while holding a cup of hot cocoa. They're injected with honest and raw lyrics that are delivered gently, as the subject matter is of a confessional tone. In ■ way, they feel like as if Cometbus's zines were translated to song. There are topics of loss, emotional sensitivity, pain, and struggle. But they're packaged in a beautiful way. I listened to this record while my boyfriend's calico warmly purred on my lap and it felt

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very appropriate. Somewhat venerable, somewhat familiar. —Kayla Greet (See My Friends)

MOTHER WHALE *Hello, Earth...Goodbye, LP*

This is easily one of the better contemporary avant/experimental records I've heard in a while (it came out four years ago; I think I can call it contemporary). There's deepness and richness, an obvious understanding of tone and mood. They have personality. The songs not only seem to come from somewhere, they seem to go somewhere, which is rare for the form. They also seem to not only be (obviously) influenced by Eno, but seem to understand his approach to music and how to utilize that approach towards their specific ends—another rarity. Not sure if Mother Whale has gotten much attention, but they should. —Matt Werts (Lo & Behold)

MOUTH: (Mouth...again): CS

Plodding, sludge hardcore with heavy bass and the throat-splitting vocals I expect. They sometimes divert during the tracks and go more melodic, or staccato—sort of like Fucked Up without the intricacy or originality—and not often enough to keep me interested. But it's listenable and probably mosh-pittable. "Mr. Z" is my favorite track. I would like to hang with Mr. Z as he receives tribute with metal licks laid on top of slow screaming and growling group chants. I don't have a verdict. It's not a genre I listen to on

the regular, but I feel like they have a place somewhere, getting really pissed about—I don't know—whatever these dudes are pissed about. Go for it. —Sal Go (Dead Broke)

MVPS, THEE: ELH +3:7"

Thee MVPs trade in garage punk goodness and on this EP, pair two rockin' originals with two inspired covers. In a nod to everyone's favorite whacked-too-soon *Sopranos* mobster, "Big Pussy (Snitches In Ditches)" is a killer dose of raw, catchy post-punk that Young Offenders fans will dig. "ELH" slows the tempo down in preparation for stomping covers of Billy Childish and The Damned. Excellent EP! —Chad Williams (Bachelor)

NAKED BEAST: Self-titled: CD

Featuring three ex-Crime members, Naked Beast's eponymous debut surprises and mesmerizes. A delightfully weird, yet totally cohesive vision, each of the album's eight songs flows seamlessly into the next. Frontman Johnny Strike reads choice excerpts from his books throughout, accompanied by intermittent full-fledged bangers. Part spoken word, part punkadelic romp, this album is fiercely enjoyable. —Simone Carter (Guitars And Bongos)

NATURAL-CAUSES: Self titled: LP

This cannot be slotted into an easy category. It's garage. It's post-punk. It's art punk. It's garage post-punk art punk. It's this and it's that. If you

like the Ausmuteants, the Fall, Goner Records, and mew-sick of that nature, then you will find that Natural Causes are simply the bees knees. It's slightly blown out and echo chamber in the vocals, with screeching synths that calm down occasionally to recall days of yore when bands like Devo were beginning to happen. Then you have the clangy guitars that chime and crash and rattle over a rock-solid beat. Shit like this will have you totally wired (pronounced "why-urd"). Some of the tracks on the B side hang out past their expiration date, but then you get some real boss sounds like "Behave" and "New Hues," and everything seems just right for a few moments. —Matt Average (Sorry State, sorrystaterecords.com)

NICKY REYNOLDS AND HIS PUSHERS: Demos: CS

After I listen to this release a couple more times, I will likely file it between Belle And Sebastian and the Modern Lovers. Great songs, jangly guitar lines, and excellent lo-fi recordings mean that I'm in a better mood than I was before I put this on. Five thumbs up, ten-out-of-five stars, A+++, et cetera. —Jon Mule (Self-released)

NO GIVE: Paying the Fine: 12" EP

Pummeling, unrelenting Midwestern hardcore that recalls the withering assault of Negative Approach and Out Cold. No frills, no dilly-dallying, and no bullshit, just pure, feral rage. —Jimmy Alvarado (Give Praise)

NOTHING OF MERIT: I Am of Ease: LP

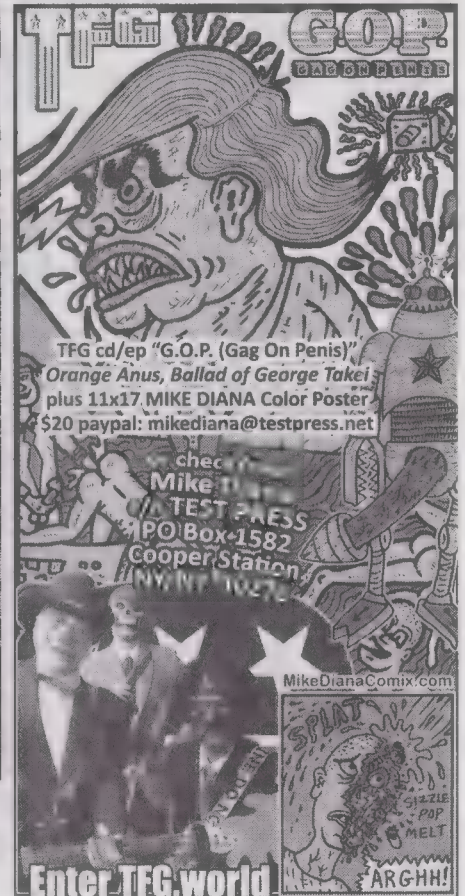
Poorly recorded and poorly played, this LP sounds more like an impromptu jam session than a coherent album. Except for "Factor of 10" (which was constructed around a solid groove), every song on this album is hard to listen to all the way through. *Use of Ease* is sort of like Frankenstein's monster: each track consists of incompatible, rotten riffs sloppily stitched together. Pressed on bright blue vinyl, this LP at least looked promising. But overall, Nothing Of Merit is true to its name. —Simone Carter (Reason For Resistance)

OUTTA: Mmm Mm for a Drink: CS

Short run tape of a full length that came out in 2015. Catchy indie/punk songs with the occasional surprise, like the almost falsetto backing vocals on "Hell-Man." Pleasant, melodic, a little gritty. The vocalist really kicks the lyrics out rapid-fire. Think AJJ or the Weakerthans' faster songs after a few packs of smokes. If I said it sounded kind of "Dead Broke-ish," would I be doing any involved parties a grave disservice? Because, honestly, it sounds kind of Dead Broke-ish. Nice racket for a three piece, if not quite a barnstomper. —Keith Rosson (Dead Broke)

P.R.O.B.L.E.M.S.: Doontown Shakes: LP

Portland, Ore.'s P.R.O.B.L.E.M.S. play raw bar punk with lead guitar riffs and a major Motörhead influence. A supergroup consisting of members of noteworthy bands including Pierced Arrows, Defiance, and Poison Idea,



P.R.O.B.L.E.M.S. might come off ■ too polished on this new full-length, but what's to be expected from a seasoned batch of champions? It's hard to envision them playing in non-smoky rooms, too, but it is 2017! They have a ton of releases already, but this LP is definitely a hearty addition to their catalog. —Art Ettinger (Rockstar)

PAGENINETYNINE: Document #5: LP

This is a gorgeous repress of ■ inimitable record, the first full length from some of the highest true believers in punk. *Document #5* is their first full length and it's something special to see it treated with such care in this re-issue, with different color patterns being dispatched to different labels and the band on their benefit tour with Majority Rule. I don't know what can be said about this record that hasn't been said before. I know *Document #8* is a more time-tested favorite, but this one is just ■ little more rustic. It gives a window into where real, actual emotional post-hardcore came from before people got confused over what that title meant. It's risky and challenging and chaotic and gut-wrenching and beautiful. There's still nothing like it, and may never be again. Amen. —Theresa W. (Reptilian)

PAINT FUMES: If It Ain't Paint Fumes It Ain't Punk ■ CD

Don't even bother trusting this review because I'm a sucker for garage-dwelling, fuzzy, blues punk and it takes quite ■ bit for me to hate even the most formulaic of the genre. The

band's name is appropriate—this sounds like everything paint fumes symbolize if anything ever could, not completely unfinished but raw and full of promise. Start with track four, "Mass Confusion," and then take it from the top. —Nicole X (Get Hip)

PATRONS, THE: Gold: 10" EP

This sounds like Buzzo from the Melvins fronting ■ Red Dons-inspired death punk band. Or maybe I'm over thinking this. I think this is the type of stuff I would assume is hiding in the folds of old punk labels back catalogues. The stuff that didn't catch on and stay in the history books past the band's prime. I feel like I'm listening to ■ lost great EP, but this band is still extant and around. The bass sound is absolutely ripping. Highly recommended. —Bryan Static (Ben Salad, bensalad.bigcartel.com)

PATSY'S RATS: Roundin' Up: 7"

A one-two punch of devastating power pop here. Both tunes here go straight for the knockout with hooks so sweet they'll make your incisors ache. Memorable from start to finish and begging for repeated listenings. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dirtnap)

PICTURE FRAME SEDUCTION: Interrupted Piss: 7"

These blokes (yes, they are British) have been around since 1982. They feature ■ ex-Discharge member on drums. It looks like—à la Charlie Harper—that lead singer Keith has kept this going from the start and the end result is that this

four-song single fires on all cylinders. "Hateful Angus" and "Everything" are my favorites here. I wonder if they ever play across the pond? —Sean Koepenick (Cider City)

PIECE WAR: Apathy: LP

Originally pressed ■ thirty 10" lathe cuts, *Apathy* gets ■ official vinyl release. New Zealand-primal, early KRS, lo-fi beat, and angry harmonies. Heavens To Betsy and Sleater-Kinney blasted from a boom box echoing in a bathroom. Authenticity is impossible to contain. It distorts and bends the confines of regular fidelity trying to break free. Play loud; shout and bop along. —Matt Seward (Square One Again, squareoneagain.storenvy.com)

PINE HILL HAINTS, THE: Smoke: LP

Hell yeah! Just in time for Halloween, a new Haints record, and an album at that. Thirteen tracks in total, and not ■ dud. For those unfamiliar, the Haints ■ not afraid of their regional influences in that they have cultivated a sound that seamlessly blends the blues, country, and early rock'n'roll all wrapped up in ■ Southern gothic, DIY shell. Recorded in one evening, you can literally feel the humidity dripping from the ceiling on all of these tracks. Comparing these cats to anyone else would be an insult, but I imagine if you dig Hasil Adkins or stuff like Jimmie Rodgers along with your punk rock, you will find plenty to love here. —Garrett Bamwell (Arkham, arkhamrecords.net)

PLAN 37: Say Goodbye: CD

One of my favorite albums of the year ■ far was by Deforesters and this reminds me a lot of that band (there is one shared member, so it's ■ huge surprise). There's ■ quality to both bands that makes me stand an inch or so taller and feel a bit better about myself, the result of big chords and equally large choruses coming across as such an empowering combination. Any band that can positively affect my mood is a winner in my book and Plan 37 achieves that. —Rich Cocksedge (MyFingers! MyBrain!)

PLAX: Clean Feeling: LP

How to capsule the sound of Plax? They're a mix of punk, post-punk, and garage. They feature members from OBN Ills, Spray Paint, and Skeleton, so those influences seep in. You could compare them to Institute, who I do like, but Plax is much better. The songs are largely mid tempo with some jangly guitars, a propulsive bass, and drummer who knows there's power being economical. "What a Waste" is ■ killer among killers that takes off right out the gate with the bass up in the mix, pushing the whole affair forward. "Mistake" is somewhat similar, and just ■ good. I like the confrontational tone of "Location," but it's the closer, "Mold," that has me singing the praises of Plax. It's a drawn-out song that is heavy in atmosphere. The guitar work is a-f'n number one primo. Great record! —Matt Average (Super Secret, supersecretrecords.com)

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PLAYOFF BEARD: *Is Fun: LP*

The incredible Pittsburgh pop punk band Playoff Beard finally releases its first full-length after eight years and several member changes. Comprised of past and present members of other subgenre-spanning bands including Tommy Gutless, Radio Beats, The Shutouts, and Lansbury, Playoff Beard gelled into a truly inspired, mind numbingly good lineup. With the band somewhat eschewing the more overtly political lyrical stylings of their early material, this LP focuses instead on personal musings regarding the concept of fun. Definitively melodic, yet with stellar gruff vocals, Playoff Beard is the ultimate reimagining of 1990s pop punk. This LP is an absolute must for anyone into that undeniably magical musical form. It's on beautiful colored vinyl, with a cool printed lyric sheet included, too. Don't miss out on Playoff Beard. They're a personal favorite, and I guarantee you'll adore this LP. —Art Ettinger (Between The Days)

PLURALS, THE: *Swish: CD*

The Plurals write good rock songs. Very good, in fact. This is the second album I have enjoyed reviewing by the Lansing, Mich.-based band after 2015's *An Onion Tied to My Belt*. My favorite songs on *Swish* happen to be sung by Hattie, the drummer, but I always get the chills when I listen to this band that all three members are pulling their weight. The Plurals are a group effort, worth more, I presume, than the sum of their parts. The guitar tones are

fantastic, the bass lines are complex, and every song is well-crafted. This month many of us have mourned the death of Grant Hart of Hüsker Dü. While so much of punk history and present tends to focus on the edges of the country, the Plurals, like Hart and Hüsker, remind us that the Midwest United States cannot be ignored. —Jon Mule (GTG, gtgrecords.net)

POISON IDEA:

Darby Crash Rides Again: LP

Another reissue of this band's early material, this time with three less songs, but remixed and remastered all nice 'n' purty. Includes tracks from the *Boner's Kitchen* and *Darby Crash Rides Again* demos on the first side, and most of a live radio performance on KBOO from 1983 on the flip. Those partial to the band's *Pick Your King* era will be tickled pink by this. Short, sharp thrash, no fuss, no bullshit, all ragin' all the time. Every reason why this band is so adored is in full evidence here. —Jimmy Alvarado (TKO)

POISON IDEA:

Latest Will and Testament: LP

A reissue of this legendary band's 2006 album, remastered and all the bells and whistles that make the great all the better. From what I can gather, this is the last album before the death of founding member Pig Champion, hence the title. Bit of a sonic jump for someone like me, who just got acquainted with their second album, *War All the Time*, three decades after it came out. While things

are largely slowed down from their early days (though they can, and do, thrash things up in fine form here and there), they lost none of the power and intensity that made them so goddamned awesome during the "glory" days of hardcore. Songs are well structured and pack one helluva wallop. Worth every penny you shell out for it, kids. —Jimmy Alvarado (TKO)

POISON IDEA: *War All the Time: LP*

Must admit I've never really listened to Poison Idea after *Kings of Punk*. Not 'cause of any dislike of 'em or anything. Quite the contrary, in fact. It's just that after that point I decided drinkin' and hell-raising was a much worthier pastime and, as a result, I missed out on a lotta shit I would've liked the first time 'round. Fuckin' monster of a record here—wild, angry thrashin' that death-grips the jugular and doesn't let up until it decides you've had enough. Band is in fine form here and, overall, I can see why this bad boy is just as venerated as any of its predecessors. Fuggin' love it. —Jimmy Alvarado (TKO)

PROPAGANDHI: *Victory Lap: CD/LP*

It took me about five listens to get into Propagandhi's latest album. Then I read a news article that got me pissed off and I cranked this album of twelve songs up loud. I realized that despite the lack of pissed-off vocals from bassist Todd Kowalski (whose guttural yells on past albums gave a sense of urgency to the music), vocalist/guitarist Chris Hannah still retains a subtle anger

in his voice. The difference is that it's not beating anyone over the head here. The riffs are as intense as past albums on songs such as "Comply/Resist" and "In Flagrate Delicto." There's still righteous frustration over these thirty-seven minutes but it's also tinged with a sense of resignation that maybe shit won't ever change and what's the point? It's something I've been thinking about more and realized that the importance of life is found in our individual relationships and helping people. Systems may not fall and maybe we may not all be famous. However, it's lives lived in dignity and that contribute to those around one's self that can mean more than anything. Propagandhi can be assured that their lyrics and stance on important political and social issues of our times have shown their dignity, contributed happiness to many lives, and caused some of us to change how we view issues. And the songs also rock, so there's that. —Kurt Morris (Epitaph)

PSOAS: *EP: CS*

Buenos Aires hardcore quartet Psoas pack more rage, meaning, and style in this less-than-five-minute demo than some bands do in a catalog. For fans of power violence and political punk like Los Crudos. —Candace Hansen (Richter Scale)

PSYCHIC JUDGE:

...Is in Line with the Divine: CS

It took me a second, but I've decided that I really like this band. Psychic Judge's

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lead screamer embraces ■ atonal delivery, adding in some Kathleen Hanna-esque vocals here and there to break up the discord. Aggressive, driving bass and distorted guitar make this EP sound like if Siouxsie And The Banshees and Mydolls joined forces for ■ jam session. I'm definitely going to be on the lookout for Psychic Judge's debut full-length. —Simone Carter (Self-released)

PUKE SPIT AND GUTS: *Eat Hail Lead: LP*
Obscure punk from San Fernando Valley, ■ place so hideous it makes San Francisco seem majestic. This was originally unleashed in 1980, playing up to the most insane and inane perceptions of punk with ■ almost cartoon like approach. No profound political or social platitudes will be found here. Songs like "Kill for Kicks," "Slashin' Your Wrists," and the love song of love songs, "Scratch and Sniff" are indicators of what lies in store for you, the listener. I'm pretty ■ this will offend some, but not everyone has ■ sense of humor, and that's their problem, not mine. Far more appealing than six hours of evangelical goat porn. —Matt Average (Slovenly)

RADIATION RISKS: *Goodbye Money: 7"*
The orchestrated chaos of Radiation Risks—the drums nearly going off the rails, the saxophone diving down out of the ether, the fuzzed-up bass lines—is worth revisiting and revisiting again. There are so many layers here to what has all the elements of a hardcore band

but must not be dismissed so easily. I can tell that Radiation Risks have so much musical ability and imagination beyond the great songs that are represented here. I love this seven inch and cannot wait to hear more from this band. —Jon Mule (Self-released)

RADIOACTIVITY: *"Infected" b/w "Sleep": 7"*
Having solidified their legendary status ■ half of the Marked Men, both Jeff Burke and Mark Ryan along with recruits Daniel Fried and Gregory Rutherford (both of Bad Sports fame and ■ excellent band in their own right) join forces to form Radioactivity in Marked Men's downtime in order to shake the cobwebs out of their ever-so-fruitful music writing heads. Two albums and three EPs later the musical output is ■ effervescent as their first full length. "Infected" is a hook-laden gem with ■ marvelously crafted guitar tone and ■ beat, however steady, that invites the hips of even the hardest of dudes in ■ GISM shirt to sway along. "Sleep" has a poppier sound but relies on its brevity and straight forwardness to lay its egg in your brain which hatches right around the time you start your morning routine after ■ late night listening session. It has certainly been a while since a band has come along that nearly everyone at *Razorcake HQ* ■ get behind. That says a lot, considering we come from all walks of life and, especially, musical tastes. Here's to many more shared smiles, head bobs, and fist pumps brought on by one of

the very best bands going on today. —Juan Espinosa (Wild Honey)

RADIUM GRRRLS: *Pro Choice: 7"*
This Swedish band is named after female American factory workers who suffered from radiation poisoning after working with radium paint during and after World War I, something I'd not heard of previously. This debut release certainly channels the anger I imagine was felt back then ■ women began to fall ill and even die after their wartime exertions. With members of Totem Skin and Livet Som Insats involved, Radium Grrrls already has a hardcore pedigree. Lead vocalist Emilia Henriksson has the perfect voice for conveying the band's rage over intense musical outbursts. —Rich Cocksedge (Adagio830, adagio830.de)

RAGING NATHANS / RAD COMPANY: *Split: 7" EP*
Rad Company gives you two tracks of inspired pop punk. Drained beer cup choruses and ■ snaking pop guitar lead for good measure blend perfectly with sad sack lyrics on "Blood Bath" and the thrashing beat of "Eat Crow." Raging Nathans hit harder and faster with a rock'n'roll blinder in "Say Why." And ■ a proud owner of at least two Devo tattoos, having their cover of "Gates of Steel" committed to wax is ■ definite bonus. Now I have the memory of losing my shit in a basement while the Nathans raged it out, as well ■ the luxury of losing my shit in the comfort of my own living room. —Matt Seward

(Rad Girlfriend / Swamp Cabbage / Catnap / Sex Sheet)

■ ■ ■ Midnight Crooner: 7"
Yeesh. Where you been all my life, guys? Three songs—coming in at the two, three, and four-minute mark respectively—that get progressively more punishing and misanthropic as we go. Reminds me of those early Fucked Up 7"s, where they just ride a riff or two until the whole thing veers into a wall, but Rash is darker than that, too. Brash, ugly, sneering hardcore, and the length of the songs actually helps rather than hinders. Great, understated design as well. Really nice surprise here. Well done, mutants. —Keith Rosson (IFB)

■ ■ ■ FANCY: *Suck a Lemon: 12" EP*
Loose and jingly-jangly, this EP is not my bag. The guitars aren't tuned, the keys are overpoweringly shrill, the drumming's inconsistent, and the layered vocals are drowning in reverb. Plus, all the songs are pretty one-note: cutesy, aimless, '50s-derived pop rock. Honestly, I'd rather suck a lemon than listen to this EP again. —Simone Carter (HHBTM)

REMEMBERABLES, THE: *Self-titled: LP*
I know you can't judge a book by its cover, or a band's sound based on the other bands its members are in, but The Rememberables does not sound anything like Coke Bust (both bands share a member). This is '90s-influenced indie-rock, heavy on the fuzz and equally loaded with melody,

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resulting in ■ collection of thoroughly enjoyable songs. The highlight for me is "Ready to Run," an anthemic burst of energy featuring ■ massive chorus that becomes ■ instant earworm. —Rich Cocksedge (Adagio830)

RING ■

Nothing New, Nothing Learned: LP

Vinyl issue of this Dekalb, Ill. band's demo tape from 1984. It's kind of goofy (they were teenagers) but well recorded and has a fun feel to it. If you're into Circle Jerks then you might dig this, but for fans of those slightly-more-obscure bands from the first wave of USHC (Skate Death, Naked Hippy, Negative Element), this is really an essential release. This was recorded before USHC bands were just concerned with copying each other, so there ■ some cool and unexpected riffs, including some weird proggy-reggae verse part that is totally out of left field. There are five songs thrown on at the end that were recorded in 2013 and are totally different, like the Replacements with more of a Squeeze/Jam style in the vocal harmonies. I was amazed at how much I liked them. Honestly, the early recordings and the new recordings don't go well together, but each are worth the price of admission alone. —Ian Wise (Beer City)

■ RIPCORDZ: The Vinyl Countdown: 2 ■ LP

There are many, many amazing punk rock bands from Canada, but ■ there any bands that ■ as intrinsically Canadian ■ Montreal's Ripcordz? ■

don't think so. For almost forty years Paul Gott and his sometimes revolving lineup of musicians have criss-crossed the country playing halls, bars, basements, and garages influencing generations of Canadian punks to get out there and do their own thing. This beautiful double album both serves as ■ "greatest hits" package (with fifteen albums to date, there is a lot to choose from) and a showcase for ■ handful of new or previously unreleased tracks. There is also a great retrospective booklet with about a million photos from their many tours and a CD copy of ■ Christmas album they put together ■ few years ago. You can't go wrong! Those of you who don't reside north of the forty-ninth parallel may not be ■ of the Ripcordz (they have only played outside of Canada a handful of times, including once at the legendary CBGB's), but I can't recommend them enough. Huge singalong songs, sometimes political, sometimes funny, but always guaranteed to get you dancing around the pit with a smile on your face. This package is the perfect way to get acquainted, eh? —Ty Stranglehold (En Guard)

RIVERS EDGE: Self-titled: CS

Your members include folks responsible for pieces of TBIAPB, Future Virgins, ADD/C, ThunderKrotch, and, most importantly, Rice Harvester. Yet Rivers Edge, while bringing hooks aplenty, carries ■ angrier weight in their tunes. It's ■ darkness you can live with though, even take comfort in.

It's the audio equivalent of sitting on ■ friend's couch until the wee hours of the morning, hashing out your opinions on how the world is going to hell, but knowing you'll wake up together tomorrow ready to fight the good fight with full hearts and side by side. If you're reading this zine, you should be buying this release. Professional cassette, Zach Hobbs cover art, and lyrics sheet. —Matt Seward (Buzzards Gotta Eat)

ROSHOMON: Demo: 7"

This is ■ solid four-song demo from Washington D.C. speed hardcore outfit. The lyrics are in Japanese. Unless it means something I'm not aware of, the band name is a reference to the highly influential Akira Kurosawa film about several interpretations of one crime. The single is really only missing an obi-strip. I hate to be so obvious, but it's solid choice for fans of Systematic Death or The Stalin. All four songs blaze at the solid pace of your favorite Japanese punk. It's a solid single, especially for a demo. Blazing. —Billups Allen (Society Bleeds)

RUBBER MATE:

"Cha Boi" b/w "Hog Tied": 7"

Two songs of total blown-speaker nihilism from this Cleveland band. These riffs make me want to find the filthiest basement possible and bang my head against the wall until it turns into raspberry jelly, in ■ good way. Total Punk has yet to let me down. —Chris Terry (Total Punk)

SACRIFICIO: Pulidores de Tumbas: LP

Absolutely punishing hardcore punk from el Gran Tenochtitlan (that's Mexico City to you, gabacho). Not a second is wasted on this platter; every song is ■ fucking ripper. These dudes clearly hold an altar to Capitalist Casualties and I'm right there along with them as many songs echo the brute force and unrelenting speed of the Bay Area legends we all know and love. If you like it loud, fast, and piss-drunk angry then look no further than the slums of CDMX for your new hardcore punk heroes. Go ahead and build that wall, Trump: Sacrificio will reduce it to rubble with their devastating wall of hardcore noise. —Juan Espinosa (SPHC)

SECONDHAND UNDERPANTS:

Slayer: CDEP

Per the tags on the band's bandcamp page, Secondhand Underpants play gritty riot grrrl punk from Istanbul. I liked the sound: heavy buzzsaw guitars and snotty, defiant vocals, but *Slayer* is one of those records that I wanted to like more than I actually did. I'm no one to scoff at dirty, sloppy rock'n'roll—one of the best drugs ever—but this recording sounds just too hasty and ragged for my tastes. —The Lord Kveldulfr (No address listed)

SEVEN CROWNS: Lightning Rod: LP

Despite the heavy metal cover art and song titles like "So Below" and "Backwoods Baby," Seven Crowns are more in line with modern hardcore like Fucked Up and Cross Stitched

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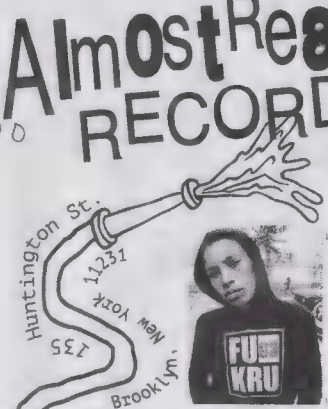


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Eyes. I like that they are mixing things up sound wise, but the results are pretty uneven. Some songs go way too long, and the playing lacks that edge needed to keep you engaged for the long haul. The danger of musical proficiency is that it can scrub the soul out of your music. A good bit of heavy editing and allowing for a rawer edge could work wonders. —Matt Average (Negative Press, Facebook.com/sevencrowns)

SEXT MESSAGE: *Brace Yourself: CD*

How do you feel about keytars? I typically like them, because I like fun. Despite occasional digressions when they are trying to be mushy, Sext Message is a fun band. They make lo-fi synth pop with keytars and other roboty-sounding devices. Sometimes it sounds kind of like dial-up Internet. Sometimes it sounds like '80s movies. I wish there was a little less kissy stuff and more stuff about the threat of takeover from evil robots, but emotions cannot stand in the way of the fun to be had here. —MP Johnson (Self-released)

SITES & SOUNDS:

■ *Night* ■ *So Dark: 7"*

Reissue of a Baltimore garage rock gem originally released on CEI Records in 1967. Title track is a slow, moody piece with multi-part harmonies. Flip is a primitive instrumental with a simple plucked guitar lead. Pure amateur greatness in full evidence. —Jimmy Alvarado (Slovenly, slovenly.com)

■ *CHURCH: Out of Tune, In Touch with the Devil: LP*

I wonder if "Skip Church" is a command, or if it's supposed to be a guy's name, like "Pablo Cruise." In any event, these Chicagoans appropriate the deliberate, bulldozing, mixed-gender style of NYC's Little Killers (minus the hot-shit guitarist, although they try) to fine effect, although their innate flightiness prevents them from going for the throat like ■ buncha bloodthirsty heathens as often as one might like to see. Still, I gotta admit that I looked up from whatever it was I was doing midway through the second number, when that "DID YOU GET THE MESSAGE FROM ME?? DID YOU GET THE MESSAGE FROM ME??" part came on. By the middle of the second side, things veer a bit more towards that kind of Hozackey pop that ruled the roost in the earlier portions of this decade, but, either way this is kind of ■ band to watch. Whether that ■ watching from in front of the stage or way in the back by the bar and coat check remains to be fully divined. BEST SONG: "The Message." BEST SONG TITLE: "Greenies." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Liner notes advise "Be good. Watch out for trolls." —Rev. Nørð (Randy, randyrecords.bandcamp.com)

SLUDGE / THISCLOSE: *Split: 7"*

Sludge from Japan play a rather unremarkable style of Burning Spirits style hardcore. The vocals lack any kind of intensity or fury which is

typically associated with the style that bands such ■ Death Side, Forward, Paintbox, and Paranoid have done and ■ doing so much better. Thisclose are doing the whole "Grave New Beat" thing but also without much variation in style other than the god awful vocal delivery that ■ many like to call "heavy metal." Look, you're not wrong: but you need to actually be somewhat familiar with metal music before you associate Mötley Crüe and Quiet Riot with any band who sings with a high-pitched squeal. Better comparisons would be Mercyful Fate, Helloween, and Trouble. Both bands are pretty generic as far ■ modern d-beat and hardcore goes and, honestly, I expected better. —Juan Espinosa (SPHC)

SOFT SHOULDER: *Repeat #4 AKA Duesart Plants and Scooter in Carport: LP*

Captured on two sides of this record is a band jamming ■ song to see what works and what does not, with results to be revealed on an upcoming release. The first side, AKA "Warbled Practice" is the more conventional version, despite the varying speeds of the recording (which makes for some interesting sounds). I prefer the version on the B side, AKA "Large Group in Close Quarters." The use of ■ tape machine at the beginning gives this a more immediate and urgent feel as they kick off into a repetitive zone, falling under hypnosis. The strength of the spell is sometimes tested by ■ skronky wonky guitar, but not enough to snap you out of it. A good thing or

a bad thing? It all depends on where your sonic peccadilloes lie. Me? I want to get real gone. Real gone! —Matt Average (Alien Summer / Gilongo)

SOFT SHOULDER:

Songs ■ *Intermissions: LP*

Vacillating between pure noise and sweet, crunchy grooves, Soft Shoulder at once shocks and stimulates. In its ecstatic no wave freakouts, *Songs & Intermissions* is at times abrasive and nearly unlistenable. But trudge through the dense jungle of fuzz and sound long enough and you'll be rewarded with jagged, interesting and—dare I say, beautiful?— post-punk bangers. Fans of Can and The Fall take note. —Simone Carter (Gilongo)

SOMATIX:

Weapons of Mass Distraction: CS

After singer Mary Chakhtoura's band Ratbite broke up, they left ■ void in Seattle anarcho/crust scene. I always liked them because they danced in the margins between anarcho and punk. So it's awesome to see her back making aggressive female-fronted music. Somatix has ■ serious sense of urgency to their songs; they play tight, fast, and angry. In a lot of the tracks they demonstrate these amazing buildups that transition to hardcore breakdowns and then again into ■ few measures of total trash. The vocals scream by in quick succession with just the right amount of reverb to make them sound ■ bit paranoid. From the first bleed out of guitar feedback to the last

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pummeled drum beat, I love every bit of this demo. My only wish would be for ■ lyric sheet. For the most part, Mary's sing/shout style is clear and easily discernible, but when every instrument is blaring through, it gets ■ little difficult to pick out the words. Yeah, this rules. I can't wait to see them play. —Kayla Greet (Self-released)

SOREX: Portrait of a Prisoner: LP

Originally a three-song 7" released in 1985, this record features those songs, the *Never Forget* demo tape, plus six additional outtakes. Although this Redondo Beach, Calif. four piece only existed for ■ couple years, this record shows that the potential was already there. Loud, trashy, and bratty is what first comes to mind after a few spins. They would have fit in well on a triple bill with Code Of Honor and Angry Samoans. My crystal ball tells ■ that there was an SSD influence here as well. Okay, that's baloney—the bassist is wearing ■ SSD shirt on the back and they have ■ song called "How We Rock" on here, twice! But the songs stand tall on their own. This is a prime slice of '80s punk. Long live the Rat! —Sean Koenenick (Radio Raheem)

STALE PHISH, THE: Pole Jams: LP

Snotty, sloppy, juvenile skate punk from fucking Detroit! With songs about, well, just skating really, these delinquent shredders provide a half hour of pure fun. Musically, if you remember the '90s Sonoma, California band The Randumbs, well, that's what

you're gonna get. Negative points for misspelling "fish" in the band name; we don't need any reminders of that shitty jam-band garbage in our punk! —Chad Williams (Not Like You)

STRUGGLE, THE: Endless: LP

U.K. old-timers from notable punk outfits such Crashed Out and Gimp Fist coming correct with some hard street punk. Taking the best of the U.K. oi classics but mixing it up with ■ harder Old Firm Casuals bite or even some of the slower NYHC gear. This shit is definitely top of the current U.K. street punk pile. —Tim Brooks (Pirates Press, piratespressrecords.com)

SUBURBS, THE: Hey Musel: CD

New album by this venerated '80s cabal of Minneapolis wavos. Songs have a definite feel of that era, blending Psychedelic Furs-styled new wave with dancier elements into songs that sound ready for prime-era KROQ afternoon drive-time airplay. Not ■ bad, thing, per se, and in this case, it results in ■ album that's listenable with ■ hint of nostalgia that doesn't get too obnoxious. —Jimmy Alvarado (The Suburbs, thesuburbsband.com)

SUNBATHER: Self-titled: 12"

Lots of sneering and swagger from this cross-Atlantic bro-down. Hearing ■ late '70s New York and some early '80s L.A... and ■ Doc Watson cover in these jams. I could shake ■ fist to all four of these songs. —Chris Terry (Hjernesvind)

SVART STÄDHJÄLP:

Avveckla Dig Själv: 7" EP

These cats have the whole hardcore thing dialed right the fuck in. Instead of going the blinding speed route, they opt for ■ good gallop, lock themselves into the pocket and let fly some potent, snarling thrash. Good, good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (Svart Stadhjäl, facebook.com/svartstadhjalp)

SYSTEM SYSTEM: Isolation: 12" EP

Thick, brutish hardcore with a '80s thrash metal influence in the guitars. The vocals make me think capital "H" hardcore, but then the lack of mosh beatdown parts make's me think they're a punk band. But I mean, if you name your band after Crass lyrics, you gotta be ■ punk band, right? From a mathematical standpoint, I would say, System System is forty-five percent Cro-Mags, fifteen percent early Metallica (*which is a healthy dose!*), thirty-eight percent Fucked Up, and two percent Crass. Another savory slice of Canadian hardcore. —Daryl (Psychic Pain)

TANKINI: Do U Suk: CS

Tankini makes fuzzy pop punk that walks the line between melodic and saccharine in just the right way. The vocals are brash but sweet, the lyrics ■ relatable to ■ almost painful extent ("you broke up with me in ■ text message"), and the guitars remain loud throughout. Like Swearin', Punkin Pie, and Aye Nako before them, Tankini makes heartfelt rock'n'roll that retains

an edge. This tape really hits the spot. —Lyle (Get Better)

TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET:

Stealing the Covers: CD

Hell yeah, new TBR! Just kidding. They didn't write any of these songs. The deal with this record is basic: pop punk stalwarts TBR covering other bands. But what makes it a standout concept is they ■ only showcasing bands that never really got their due. Think of it more of Ray and Kody's catchy voices putting their own little stamp ■ bands that play similar tunes. This record is ■ complete success in the fact that I hadn't ever heard of most of these bands. Though there are some I was pleasantly surprised to see, like Head and Artimus Maximus both of which I've seen play shows in Seattle and Bremerton. To be honest, I never liked Artimus Maximus when they played local shows, but this version has swayed me a bit. Then there are bands like The Gullibles whose song "Gay Parade" was never even released. They were still in high school when they wrote that song and now it has a home on a Fat release! Or there's a track from Austria's The Mugwumps who are still cranking out pop punk gems. The liner notes include a story from Kody, Miguel, and Ray about how they found each band, as well as how they've wanted to make this record ever since *Total* came out in 2005! The closer is from ■ band called The Punchlines whose song "Why the Big Pause?" makes me giggle each time I

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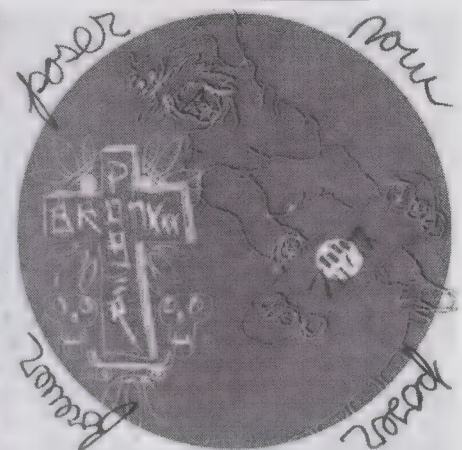
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hear it. Maybe some of these covers will show up in TBR's live set. One can only hope. —Kayla Greet (Fat)

THIN LIPS: *Divorce Year*: CS

Wait, another great band from Philadelphia? This is a second run of their debut EP, this time out on Get Better Records, also out of Philly. Singer Chrissy Tashjian carries a well of emotion and melody through her voice. I feel like the tone of each song is set by her vocal cadence and the guitars come in as backup singers later. She reminds me of a mix between Miski Rodriguez (City Mouse), Carrie Akre (Hammerbox), and a bit of Lauren Freeman (Benny The Jet Rodriguez). This cassette is four songs of beautiful, driven punk with some fuzz and playful lyrics. Thin Lips delivers each track with a slight smirk. They masterfully speed up and draw out time signatures at just the right moments. I'm seeing them for the first time next week with Worriers and I'll be scoping out their merch table for a full length, for sure. —Kayla Greet (Get Better)

THIS MEANS WAR: *Sailing Anarchy*: 10"

Dutch street punkers whose sound is so crisp and clean you eat your fuckin' dinner off it. On the one hand, they are going for a Dropkick Murphys "all the boys together" vibe which I can handle, but when I close my eyes it sounds like some Warped Tour Fat Wreck Chords shit. I can just picture teenage hands in the air and girls crying at some giant outdoor corporate festival. Sailing

Anarchy!?? What. The. Fuck? Maybe I'm just too goddamn old. My twelve-year-old laughed out loud when I was playing this, so maybe I have a point. —Tim Brooks (Pirates Press)

THROWING ROCKS: *Self-titled*: CS

Fast paced and riff-heavy d-beat skater pop punk, Bay Area punks Throwing Rocks rip through twelve songs on their first full length release. A mix of surf, Jawbreaker, and Propagandhi, these guys don't take themselves all too seriously except their hate of Nazis and love of burritos, and it's alright by me. —Camille Reynolds (Get Better)

TIMESHARES: *Bearable*: LP

This is a re-release of Timeshares' debut full length from 2011. For me though, this is the first exposure to these songs. They've definitely always been a band on my radar, but never quite made it to my turntable. After a couple spins, I can see what all the hullabaloo is about. They're an introspective and intelligent pop punk band with sharp leads, intensive build-ups, and really strong drumming. I don't know if it's just from the overall mix, but the drums come through loud and clean, and, on top of that, there's intricate percussion worth noticing. So often bands stick to a quick and typical high hat/snare/repeat combo, and this was not that at all. Timeshares is a nice mix between Arms Aloft and Get Up Kids. Emotional, melodic punk with melody and grit. They really strike a wonderful balance. —Kayla Greet (Dead Broke)

TIMMY'S ORGANISM: *Eating Colors*: LP

Aw, hell yeah! Timmy's Organism comes swingin' right out the gate in their latest full-length. Scorching licks 'n' heavy riffs propel *Eating Colors* into a frenzied and acid-soaked headbanging extravaganza. I think this album is probably best listened to in a hundred degree heat while going a hundred mph on a dusty desert road. Muy caliente and très, très chaud. —Simone Carter (Detroit Magnetic Tape / Lo & Behold)

TODAY'S HITS: *Self-titled*: LP

Chicago mainstay James Swanberg is known for many things, including writing a song a day for some amount of years. Today's Hits feels tongue-in-cheek in a lot of ways, not least of which because of its clever-ish stylization. The songs on this debut LP are pure pop from the middle few decades of the twentieth century mashed together. It's got some '50s bop, '60s rock 'n' roll, and '70s drug folk psychedelic together. I imagine one of the goals is probably to create a feeling of weightlessness, of not knowing what it is while giving a general sense of familiarity and comfort. It actually works and I spent most of this record laying on the couch looking at the ceiling, breathing at an even pace. And that's saying something; I'm not the chilliest person. —Theresa W. (Randy)

TOMS, THE: *Introducing...*: CS

The opening track "Theme" is a confused Tom playing piano with awkward skill

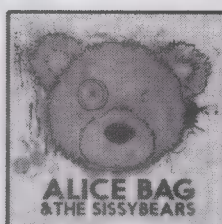
and a lot of hesitation with the other Toms snickering in the background. Yes, it seems they all named Tom. And all the songs are named after other famous Toms, including "Hanks," "Lee Jones," and "From MySpace." That's clever. But the cleverness contrasts with the rest: harmonic, dreamy pop; head-bobbing music with cute guitar solos and a sound that reminds me of early 2000s emo but without the angst which made that noise both interesting and embarrassing at the same time. I think I liked the first song the most, but I think fans of indie and safe driving music will enjoy it, if they still have a car from the 2000s with a tape player. —Sal Go (Dead Broke)

TRAMPOLINE TEAM: *Drug Culture*: 7"

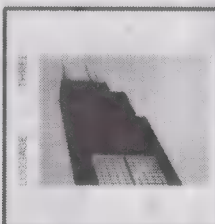
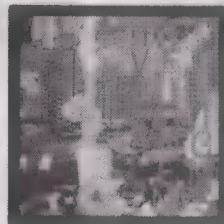
Every now and then a single comes along and just kicks your ass. This is one such single. Two straight-up smokin' tracks that burn short and flame high with a pummeling sound that recalls the best stuff from Dangerhouse's oeuvre married to Midwestern no-nonsense rockin'. Both tracks are stunners that leave ye hoping a full-length ain't far behind. —Jimmy Alvarado (Space Taker Sounds)

TUNABUNNY: *PCP Presents Alice in Wonderland Jr.*: 2 x LP

Super spaced out and dreamy, this double LP is literally like a loop around the moon into satellite territory and back. Tunabunny creates a synth-heavy love fest with all things good taken from the Raincoats, Earth Girls,



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Pavement, Breeders, and Sonic Youth. Vocals ■■■ velvety soft like the Softies, minus the melancholy lyrics with an odder tilt. Worst band name—best music. —Camylle Reynolds (HHBTM)

TV CRIME: "Clocking In" b/w "Clocking Out": 7"

U.K. quartet TV Crime's name might be ■ unknown quantity to many but based on these two infectious tracks alone, it deserves to be on the lips of all and sundry. I am too young to have experienced the 1970s pub rock scene in London but this generates an image of a smoked-filled venue rammed full of sweaty punters, all freaking out to ■ band whilst fruitlessly trying not to spill any beer. Who needs time machines when outfits like TV Crime can bring the past to the future? An excellent record. —Rich Cocksedge (Drunken Sailor)

ULTRA ■■■ La Demo: 7"

Members of the Prowlers putting down some far more serious and rough style street music. They cover early Blitz and the UK82/No Future/Riot City influence is heavy but they ■■ shoving ■ lot of their own influences here. Vice Squad never would have come up with the single note riff or breakdown in "L Horreur," and the USHC influence is there without being overbearing. If you're into newer bands like Syndrome 81, PMS 84, or Savageheads, this band is ■■ obvious win without being just another carbon copy of the style. Highest recommendations. —Ian Wise (Self-released)

USA/MEXICO: Laredo: LP

Butthole Surfer King Coffey and ■ couple o' cohorts from Shit And Shine and When Dinosaurs Ruled The Earth kick up one fucker of a ruckus. Sludgy, Flipper-esque tempos are married to all sorts aural weirdness, then the sound is completely blown out to ensure that nothing left over is ever gonna make the Billboard Top Ten. Translation: indispensable listening. Buy and file under "records to clear out any party stragglers." —Jimmy Alvarado (12XU)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Evaluate What You Tolerate! LP

Evaluate What You Tolerate! is a two-volume compilation (and zine) of Bay Area punk bands that came together to raise money for Oakland's Anti Police-Terror Project. Let's get the most important thing out of the way: this compilation is massive. It is exhausting. Coming in at forty-nine songs, there is no way to thoughtfully get through this in less than three listening sessions. These are great things because if compilations were stores, this one would be Costco for the great quality you get for the price. There's an array of sounds present between the two volumes, but I'm still leaning towards the post-punk, dark punk, and generally goth-y offerings. Wax Idols kicks off the first volume of the compilation with a cover of 7 Seconds' "Born without ■ Mind," giving it an amazing second life as ■ snare-laden, gauzy, and even danceable track. Some other favorites come care

of Primary ("Camouflage") and False Figure ("Exhale"). It's all on bandcamp so check it out. —Nicole X (Self-released, evaluatewhatyoutolerate.bandcamp.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

I Hate My Fucking Band:

A Japanese Tribute to M.O.T.O.: CD Secret Mission did the obvious thing and invited fifteen Japanese bands to breathe new life into some of M.O.T.O.'s finest songs: "Dance Dance Dance to the Radio," "Shitty Kids," "Gonna Get Drunk Tonight," and "Magic Words." Let it be known: "Magic Words" is one of the catchiest songs ever written. In fact, anyone who begs to differ hates good music and should be teleported to Venus sans spacesuit. If you're like me, you regularly return to M.O.T.O.'s jukebox of juvenile pop gems, so these covers are a damn good reason to get these songs stuck in your head all over again. Although the covers are faithful, Boys Order electrifies "Deliver" with ■ chorus so infectious it requires penicillin to cure, and The Let's Go's "Choking on Your Insides" invigorates ■ particularly glum M.O.T.O. tune by increasing the cute factor by ■ million. Honestly, there are no stinkers in the lot. The Master of the Obvious himself, Paul Caporino, closes the compilation by covering "Do the Dip" from M.O.T.O.'s "Turn Your Head and Cough"—just don't sing the chorus at work: "I do the dip when there's cum on the dancefloor." —Sean Arenas (Secret Mission)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Midwest from the Film The Ungovernable Force: 7"*

This four-song tie-in with the audacious new punk exploitation movie *The Ungovernable Force* serves solely as a collector's item to promote the movie. These are not bad reasons to exist, and all four of the songs included are classics. The packaging is nice, and it's on colored vinyl. You get one previously released hit each from Who Killed Spikey Jacket?, Zounds, Lude Boys, and Pagans. 7" soundtracks are cool, and the corresponding movie is worth seeking out, too. What are you waiting for? —Art Ettinger (BRINKvision, brinkvision.com)

VOIGHT-KAMPPF:

The On of Dying Youth: 12" EP

Six new songs from Midwestern post-punk duo Voight-Kampff. This time around I'm picking up on a lot of Christian Death and Sisters Of Mercy influence as opposed to Joy Division, which is absolutely not a bad thing. I sure do appreciate this style of music coming from the minds of guys in Framtid and Cro-Mags T-shirts because such worlds don't collide nearly enough, in my opinion. You could not ask for more from an opening track in "Victim of Desire": the pounding drum and guitar intro almost fool you into expecting hardcore punk ruckus but soon subside to ■ perfectly executed post-punk with some kick and punch to it. If you're into Merchandise then don't sleep ■ Voight-Kampff any longer. —Juan Espinosa (Deranged)

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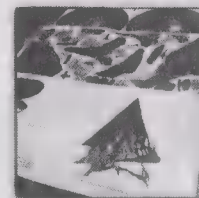
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WEDDING PRESENT, THE:
George Best 30: LP

I absolutely love The Wedding Present. For those unfamiliar, I would describe them as a British indie rock band that started in the mid-'80s that, early on, took cues from the U.K. post-punk movement (think The Fall) but mixed that sound with super catchy, fast pop songs and an endless supply of lyrics about relationships, failed relationships, love, and unrequited love. The songs are always full of wit and often really spoke to me at the time when I first discovered them in the early '90s, shortly after the release of their acclaimed *Bizarro* LP. As time went on, their sound changed a little bit, but there was a time in the mid-'90s when The Wedding Present could do no wrong, and everything they did was one hundred percent perfect. They've had many lineup changes since, but their earliest records still remain as some of my favorites. When I heard about this release, a recent "live in the studio" re-recording of their first LP with Steve Albini at the helm released for the thirtieth anniversary of the original, I was pretty skeptical since almost all instances of bands re-recording earlier material results in something subpar. This re-recording doesn't exactly disappoint—it's just as advertised—but I do have to say that the gritty, bass-heavy Albini production eliminates all of the ultra-brightness in the guitars the original LP has an overabundance of, making it a completely different listen, almost

like a different group of songs entirely. If you are a fan of the original, these re-recorded songs probably won't turn you off, as they're close enough to the originals to retain their spark, although not really different enough to make this a standout release either. —Mark Twistworthy (HHBTM)

WHISKEY ■ CO:

Ripped Together, Torn Apart: CD

First album in several years from this long-running alt country band from Gainesville. There is a bit more of what has started being called "dark Americana" in the sound this time out and it only adds to the depth of the band. I have always liked this band—and, even more so, the album by side project The Takers from nearly a decade ago. Glad to see that they are still at it and hope to see them play someday. —Mike Frame (Eager Beaver / No Idea)

WORTHWHILE WAY: "The Braves"

b/w "Momiji": 7"

Wow! This limited-to-one-hundred single comes off like a thank you letter to, well, life! The playing is so earnestly uplifting, along with the hopeful and reflective lyrics; I think this is just what my weary soul needs right now in light of our current world affairs. Check "Momiji" out on the Razorcake Channel from Fest 14, let the band's infectious joy fill your soul, smile, and then get your hands on one of the other ninety-nine copies out there. —Garrett Barnwell (No Idea)

Y.E.S.: E.P. ■ 7"

With seven original tracks, this is good, scrappy, trebly punk rock, spewing forth in short, and sharp bursts. There is an eighth track, a cover of "The Todd Killings" by Angry Samoans, which is a perfect fit for what this band is doing. There's not much more to say about this other than seek it out. —Rich Cocksedge (Crapoulet, crapoulet.fr)

ZELLOTS: Self-titled: Flexi

Supreme Echo does it again. The Victoria BC label has unearthed another vital time capsule from the earliest punk rock era on the West Coast of Canada. Last time was Victoria/Vancouver legends The Dishrags, and this time it is Vancouver's Zellots. For those not in the know (myself included), Zellots hit the scene in 1978 playing gigs with The K-Tels (later The Young Canadians), The Subhumans, Modernettes, and DOA among others. These three songs were painstakingly restored from various sources and the result is spectacular. I wish there were more tracks out there because this is quality punk rock coming out of an incredibly talented community. The flexi is super thick with slick, chrome embossed printing and die-cut to the shape of a 7". Bands made up entirely of women weren't exactly par for the course back then, so it's sure nice to see Vancouver representing. Get your hands on this! —Ty Stranglehold (Supreme Echo, supremeecho.bandcamp.com)

ZOOMIES, THE: Exist: 12"

At first I glanced at the cover and thought, "What's up with this band's dress code?" They're trying way too hard to look straight out of the '70s. Turns out I was almost right after I read the back cover. From Baton Rouge, this pressing of an early '80s cassette and a few studio tracks stars George Zoomer, who sings and plays guitar, keys, and "other." He's got a Jonathan Richman level of commitment, but less confused and a slightly tougher voice. Almost every song starts with a typical rock'n'roll lick combined with dissonant chords, and then it sounds like they become disinterested in finishing the track. So they destroy in a frenzy of weird jazz, weed, and too many random instruments at their disposal with only a basic theory on how to play them. Did they listen to this before putting it out? Or was this premeditated rock'n'roll murder, one last middle finger to disco? It's worth a listen if you like the Fall or want to confuse the hell out of the crowd at your DJ night. So I like it, and will listen to it again if I've eaten too many edibles. The artwork sums up the band's identity. On the cover, a clean, polished photo shoot, then turn it over and they left the studio, hiding in the bathroom and clearly giving no fucks, lost in their own headspaces. —Sal Go (Might Mouse Music / Almost Ready)



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- **Alien Snatch!**, Rodenbergstraße 31, 10439 Berlin, Germany
- **Almost Ready**, 135 Huntington St., Brooklyn, NY 11231
- **Antena Krzyku, Unc.**, Arkadiusz Marczyński, ul. Armii Krajowej 20, 35-307 Rzeszow, Poland
- **Arkam**, 1925 Hwy 69 S., Savannah, TN 38372
- **Bachelor**, 5421 Adnet 186, Austria
- **Bcore**, C/ Montmany, 25, 08012 Barcelona, Spain
- **Cider City**, Unit 9847, PO Box 7169, Poole, England BH15 9EL
- **Concrete Jungle**, PO Box 810 427, 90249, Nürnberg, Germany
- **Crush And Create**, c/o Sabina Husberg Götling, Spanehusvägen 53, 214 39 Malmo, Sweden
- **Dead Broke**, 139 Huber Ave., Holbrook, NY 11741
- **Deathwish Inc.**, 59 Park St., 2nd Floor, Beverly, MA 01915
- **Deranged**, c/o Gordon Dufresne, 2700 Lower Rd., Roberts Creek, BC V0N 2W4, Canada
- **Dirt Cult**, 7930 NE Prescott St., Portland, OR 97218
- **Dirtnap**, PO Box 7355, Madison, WI 53707
- **Dischord**, 3819 Beecher St. NW, Washington, DC 20007
- **Dr. Strange**, 7136 Amethyst Ave., Alta Loma, CA 91701
- **Eager Beaver**, 16-2-2F Higashibun Inoshiri, Wakimachi, Mima-City, Tokushima, Japan 7793602
- **Eccentric Pop**, PO Box 7928, Wilmington, NC 28406
- **Emotional Response**, 3800 East Mallard Lane, Flagstaff, AZ 86004
- **En Guard**, 2230 rue Coursol, Montreal PQ, H3J 1C5, Canada
- **Fat Wreck Chords**, 2196 Palou Ave., SF, CA 94124
- **Fond Of Life**, Hinter Krahenbusch 2, 66620 Primstal, Germany
- **Get Better**, PO Box 19267, Philadelphia, PA 19143
- **Get Hip**, 1800 Columbus Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15233
- **Gilgongo**, PO Box 7455, Tempe, Arizona, AZ 85281
- **Give Praise**, PO Box 494, Barnstable, MA 02630-0494
- **Goner**, 2152 Young Ave., Memphis, TN 38104
- **Happy Happy Birthday To Me**, PO Box 742, Athens, GA 30603
- **Hostage**, PO Box 5401, Huntington Beach, CA 92646
- **IFB**, 4447 St. Clair Ave. W., North Ft. Myers, FL 33903-5836
- **Iron Lung**, PO Box 80172, Seattle, WA 98108
- **It's Alive**, 11411 Hewes St., Orange, CA 92869
- **Kämäset Levyt**, Iisakintie 18, 37560, Lempäälä, Finland
- **Killjoy**, Postfach 30114, 04251 Leipzig, Germany
- **Koschke**, PO Box 127, Corvallis, OR 97339
- **Little Mafia**, 2605 Lost Trail Rd., Edmond, OK 73012
- **Lo & Behold**, 10022 Joseph Campau Ave., Hamtramck, MI 48212
- **Loony Tunes**, 69 Wykeham St., Scarborough, N. Yorks, YO12 7SA, England
- **Nineteen Something**, 72 rue de Charonne, Paris 75011 France
- **No Front Teeth**, PO Box 27070, London N2 9ZP, UK
- **No Idea**, PO Box 14636 Gainesville, FL 32604-4636
- **Northern Gothic**, 237 Maddock Ave. W, Victoria, BC, V9A 1G8, Canada
- **Not Dead Yet**, 4146 Av Henri-Julien, Montreal, QC H2W2K3, Canada
- **Not Like You**, 102 Richmond Dr. SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106
- **Nothing But A Nightmare**, 12862 Joy St., Suite 2, Garden Grove, CA 92840
- **Phratry**, PO Box 14267, Cincinnati, OH 45250
- **PIAS**, 1 Bevington Path, London, SE1 3PW, UK
- **PIG**, PO Box 13536, Des Moines, WA 98198
- **Pirates Press**, 1260 Powell St., Emeryville, CA 94608
- **Poison Moon**, 1530 Marshall #3, Houston, TX 77006
- **Sext Message**, 1640 Lenora Cir., Lincolnton, NC 28092
- **Smart Punk**, 6424 Forest City Rd., Orlando, FL 32810
- **Specialist Subject**, First Floor, Exchange, 72-73 Old Market St., Bristol, BS2 0EJ UK
- **SPHC**, 8397 Piping Rock Ct., Millersville, MD 21108
- **Spirit Of The Streets**, e.K., Schwiesaustr. 11, 39124 Magdeburg, Germany
- **Swamp Cabbage**, 1431 Michigan Ave. Apt A, Winter Park, FL 32789
- **This Is LA**, PO Box 829, Verdugo City, CA 91046
- **TKO**, 21405 Brookhurst St., Huntington Beach, CA 92646
- **To Live A Lie**, 2825 Van Dyke Ave., Raleigh, NC 27607-7021
- **Viable Utterance**, PO Box 7435, Burbank, CA 91510
- **WormHoleDeath**, 10866 Washington Blvd. #801, LA, CA 90034
- **Yo-Yo**, PO Box 920105, 12415 Berlin, Germany

RAZORCAKE RECORD REVIEW GUIDELINES AND FAQs

- The address to send all review material is Razorcake, PO Box 42129, LA, CA 90042. You may address it to specific reviewers. Just make sure they're active.
- Full album art is required for a review. Pre-releases go into the trash.
- We will not review download cards or a link to an album.
- We will not review a CD-R version of a vinyl release.
- We know mail's expensive, but we send full copies of the zine as a thanks to all who send us material to review (if your postal address is provided).
- Put a postal address on each and every piece of music sent in. Many packages get separated and given to different reviewers.
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"FLYERS: BECAUSE
THEY'RE NOT
THE INTERNET."
Amen.

THE ONLY WAY TO THROW THIS WAY
A ZINE ABOUT FLYING

BRAINSCAN #33, 4" x 7", printed, 64 pgs.

This zine is exactly the type of text I was looking to read when it comes to witchcraft. Although maybe hinted in previous issues of *Brainscan*, never has an issue been solely dedicated to the author's personal views on witchery and their life exploring their secular style of practice. While breaking down just "what is" witchcraft, the zine also serves as a sort of how-to and personal narrative, giving tips such as avoiding cultural appropriation (often so prevalent nowadays in white girl witchery world), explaining the background behind the different styles and practices, and above all (my favorite part) encouraging readers who are curious about witchcraft to go out there and do some reading, research, and just find what feels right and works for you. —Tricia Ramos (*Brainscan*, Portland Button Works, 1505 N. Bryant St., Portland, OR 97217)

BROKEN PENCIL #75, \$5.95, 1/2" x 11", 73 pgs.

This is my first time enjoying the long-running *Broken Pencil*, a magazine of "zine culture and the independent arts" out of Toronto. Aside from offering the regular slew of good ol' zine reviews (with reproduced excerpts, gimme a hell yeah!), this issue has some short stories, great comics, and has a feature article on cartoonist Erik Kostiuk Williams and his Superqueerdo series, which stars two "shapeshifting cosmic femmes" who land in Parkdale, a once interesting neighborhood of Toronto that's losing its art scene and being bulldozed for glass-walled apartment complexes. Williams' new comic, the fifty-page *Condo Heartbreak Disco*, takes on the reality of Toronto's "oh-so-real overdevelopment" with lovely thick-lined illustrations of atypical superheroes who are caught in the complicated battle of slowing gentrification. Article author Johnathan Vallery and comic artist Williams get into a cool conversation about how the comic's characters are, like a lot of artists, "drawn to the authenticity of [a] neighborhood" and enjoy its resources while simultaneously being "totally oblivious privilege-wielding jerk[s]" who can't see that their presence may bring irreversible consequences. (Sounds like me.) Anyway, that's a lot to unpack, but *Broken Pencil* is good for it. In another article, Alison Broverman adeptly explains how to protect yourself from the artist's nightmare of having work stolen and reproduced on the internet, from Pepe the Frog to weird shit you post on your blog. —Jim Joyce (*Broken Pencil*, PO Box 203, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S7 Canada, brokenpencil.com)

CABILDO QUARTERLY #11, \$1, 11" x 14", copied, 2 pgs.

The fifth anniversary of *Cabildo Quarterly* finds it at the illogical sum of issue 11. (Math works different in Mike Fournier's world.) For this issue the traditional format continues: a mixture of poetry and prose spread out over the front and back of an 11" x 14" sheet of paper. This issue has poems by Gale Acuff, Natalie Crick, and Changming Yuan (a 9-time Pushcart nominee?! Wow, *Cabildo* is moving up!). Prose comes from Rex Thomas, Brendan Kiernan, and *Razorcake*'s own Sean Arenas. Perhaps I'm partial, but I liked the story by Arenas the most, as it dealt with (as the title suggests) the goings-on of Angelenos. I'm also going to give this issue's best poem award to Gale Acuff's piece about a dead dog coming back to life. I believe in supporting the writing and publishing of *Razorcake* folks, so I'd highly recommend checking this issue out. Also, it's good writing! —Kurt Morris (cabildoquarterly@gmail.com)

CLOCK TOWER 9 #13, \$3, 5 1/2" x 11", 28 pgs.

Most of the zine features Danny's road trip from Cleveland to Portland. He buddies up with his friend Hannah, who's moving out there. They stop to read in strange places, seek out bars with bikes locked out front (a good sign for deals), and wake up in the car to a 6 AM sun. I love a good road trip read, and it's a bonus when there's no grand mission, just a couple of friends rolling along. This zine made me want to jump in a dump on wheels with only a journal, some stamps, a shitty paperback, and all my old friend's addresses. Other parts

of *Clock Tower 9*: a couple dudes write about what record they couldn't part with, Danny pulls a few items from his list of 1,000,000 things learned from postcards (items 76-91), and we also get a recipe for prison-made pizza. It calls for crushed saltines, ramen noodles, and "City Cow" cheese (pretty sure this is what Sarpino's uses, too). —Jim Joyce (Danny c/o Spin Cycle, 321 Broadway East, Seattle, WA 98102)

EARTH FIRST! JOURNAL Vol. 37, #1, 8 1/2" x 11, \$?, newsprint, 76 pgs.

The importance and relevance of *Earth First!* (journal and group) is more important now than ever before, considering the scum fuck pigs who are in the White House now, especially with Scott Pruitt wrecking the EPA. This issue features a piece on Standing Rock, as well as what's going on in Texas with twin pipeline projects headed by Energy Transfer Partners (same company behind the Dakota Access Pipeline), listing of political prisoners, newly formed radical eco groups, news roundup, and more. My favorite parts of this issue are "Dear Ned Lund," "Wolves & Poodles," and the piece on dirty tricks the FBI resort to in order to secure terrorism convictions. —Matt Average (*Earth First! Journal*, PO Box 964, Lake Worth, FL 33460, earthfirstjournal.org)

EGGY'S DEAD #2, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 36 pgs.

Eggy's Dead is an entirely submission-based literary zine. This second issue is pretty poetry heavy, but they accept all forms and styles of literature. The poems weren't really that interesting to me, but one short story entitled, "This Machine Thanks You for Your Attention" by Kevin Esposito really stood out. A future-realism look into our lives being controlled and dependent on robots, their story didn't really seem all that far off from how we are already addicted and attached to our machines, and how it can only get worse. The zine also featured some really cool abstract art, which helped break up the poetry. —Tricia Ramos (*Eggy's Dead*, riotradiopodcast.com)

GAD!, free or trade, 8 1/2" x 11", copied, 20 pgs.

GAD! rocks, okay! And if the rave reviews it gets here means anything, I'm not the only Razorcaker to think so, either. I feel privileged to get it. The *GAD!* team cover music they like excitedly and with so much joy (perhaps it's because they decide what they're gonna write about), that I actually scribble down band names to check out (and I'm a bitter old man). As a matter of fact, right now I'm listening to Genki Genki Panic because I read about them in here. To give you some context, let's compare *GAD!* to... the slick, payola rock mag strewn around the last show I was at, the one I read between bands because someone stole my copy of *Manhattan Transfer*. (Okay, that's a lot of context, I just want you to know I read it under duress.) Did I bother jotting down a single band name of whom their writers so diligently probed about the recording of their last album? Nope. Read *GAD!* Ah, I'm so proud of myself, I've managed to review *GAD!* without getting all misty-eyed about the music zines of the nineties that it reminds me of and how that was the only real way to learn about underground music if you lived in a small town, how it holds those same aesthetics, unlike the glossy, slick capitalism of the mag from the show.... Wait! Aw, fuck! —Craven Rock (*GAD!*, PO Box 1308, Gadsen, AL, 35902, gadpunk@gmail.com)

GAD #14, free or trade, 8 1/4" x 11", copied, 33 pgs.

A punk zine focused on the music scene and bands from Alabama. This issue contains reviews of new tracks and albums of The Sebastian Trials, Alkoholemia, Beware of Darkness, and more. Also has a "one question" interview with Cap'n Jazz, an interview with Tom Mullen of the podcast, Washed Up Emo, and a full directory of Alabama bands, their genre, and contact info. This issue also had two separate dedications to local musicians who had passed recently, which was a little hard for me to read (on account of

my own still processing-grief over losing artist/musician friends from the Ghost Ship Fire), but touching and important pieces for their own local scene. —Tricia Ramos (Gad!, PO Box 1308, Gadsden, AL 35902, gadpunk@gmail.com)

HEADWINDS #1, £1.50, 8 1/4" x 11 1/2", glossy printed, 24 pgs.

This music fanzine combines an interesting mix of band interviews, band-related comics, fanzine reviews, and storytelling. Not too different from a traditional music fanzine at first, but then the author has a section retelling different shows he's been to, how the bands played, and the night played out. I enjoyed it because it felt like asking your friend, "How was the show last night?" and getting a full recap. There was also a really interesting recount of a one-time festival called Treeworgery Tree Festival in 1989 that occurred only one year because of massive losses in cost, water and toilet breakdowns, corrupt security, farm animal abuse, and deaths?! I'll definitely be looking more into that story. —Tricia Ramos (Headwinds, headwindszine@gmail.com)

HERE, YOU THROW THIS AWAY: A ZINE ABOUT FLYERING,

\$5, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 35 pgs.

A zine about flyering; I think we can all get down with that on some level. The author, Tyler, comes at it from a sort of dual perspective. He's played in some bands, understands the strange beauty of Raymond Pettibon's Black Flag flyer art, but it seems like he's doing more stand-up comedy these days, and he mostly flyers for those events. On the whole, I didn't learn a lot that I didn't already know from being a flyer creep myself. But he did make me want to buy

KEEP TRACK OF THE TIME: 2015/16 COLLECTION,

5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 42 pgs.

Here we have a black and white pop punk fanzine with text up to the edge of the margins, a Mitch Clem comic on page one, an interview with Hallie from The Unlovables, and it's stapled in such a way that I can't quite open some of the pages. I know a guy in town, Bradley, who lives for pop punk (he runs poppunk.com) and my copy of *Keep Track of the Time* is going straight to him. My favorite part was a comic on the back cover, and I wish the rest of the zine had such eye-grabbing design. So here's the comic: A door guy is being yelled at by a gorilla who wants to get into the show. The gorilla says, "\$5 to get in? I'm friends with the band. I'm not paying to see my friends!" And the door guy, very frightened, says, "OK OK go in." Then, "Later that night," the gorilla is at the bar saying, "\$5 for beer, I'll have 7 more!" Pretty good! —Jim Joyce (keeptrackofthetime@gmail.com, keeptrackofthetime.wordpress.com)

LOCAL VOCALS: YOUR GUIDE TO KICK-ASS KARAOKE,

\$3, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 20 pgs.

Okay, this zine cracked me up. As someone who barely goes to karaoke (and mostly tries to avoid it), I have to give props to the writer for giving such a full description of karaoke singer types, audience member types, and how to properly enjoy and perform karaoke. Like the title of the zine indicates, this small book could be utilized by someone who has never done karaoke but has an interest in starting out, or it could be given to someone who's a karaoke superstar for a laugh! I really appreciated the parts describing different kinds

Treeworgery Tree Festival in 1989: water and toilet breakdowns, corrupt security, farm animal abuse, and deaths?!

—Tricia Ramos | HEADWINDS #1

a used staple gun. That's one of his tips. Another tip was to ask for permission when posting flyers in independently owned shops, and don't post anything plain old racist or sexist. That makes sense. Oddly, he does gripe about one proprietor's objection to have a poster for a comedy group called "Reformed Whores" displayed in their store. Tyler says that this owner was uptight. But if pressed, I think Tyler would agree that there are plenty of ways to be edgy or ridiculous in your flyers and band names without using Seth McFarlane type denigrating humor. Or maybe I just think the word "whores" is sad because I have younger sisters. Gripes aside, *Here, You Throw This Away* is a funny read. Tyler is passionate about flyers, and it's neat to hear him freak out about this or that topic, such as his feelings about flyers that are all text: "Whenever I see a flyer typed up in Microsoft Word, I want to fucking light it on fire." And who can't get behind his main argument—"FLYERS: BECAUSE THEY'RE NOT THE INTERNET." Amen. —Jim Joyce (Tyler Sonic, tywilliamson@gmail.com, tylersonic.com)

I'M SENDING MESSAGES INTO OUTER SPACE,

\$15, 4 1/4" x 11", copied, 15 pgs.

A dozen or so short poems accompanied by high-contrast copier art and a handful of digital illustrations that look somewhat out of place plopped in the middle of this thing. There's a loose connecting thread of space imagery throughout the chapbook, but this is all over the place in terms of tone and aesthetic. The writer occasionally lapses into an affected phonetic spelling that is not working for me; it's sort of an ex-gonzo hippie vibe. The rest isn't terrible. —Indiana Laub (Space Cowboy Books, spacecowboybooks.com)

INCREDIBLE INQUIRY REVIEWS Part 30, \$2, 8 1/2" x 11", copied, 6 pgs.

Three sheets of small type, stapled together at the corner, consisting of sketchily spelled paragraphs proffering opinions and enlightened insight on random subjects, including, but not limited to, nature (good), agribusiness (bad), government (bad), god (good), poison (bad), cancer (bad), "lower level entities" (unclear), liquor (bad now), balance (good), sound (good, but not CDs or rock music, which are bad), aromas (good), drugs (bad), "Dispenser of Evil Punishment" (now known as "Devil," bad), kinetic energy (good), virtual reality (bad), and much more, but I don't want to give out too many more spoilers. —Rev. Nerb (153 Village Circle, Garden Valley, ID 83622)

of singers, especially "The Rehearser," which perfectly described my ex-boss who would play the same five tracks on our office computer, singing along all day for my eight hour shift, preparing herself for her weekly karaoke night. If you're a karaoke lover, please don't be like my ex-boss. Please don't play Rihanna's "Rude Boy" over and over every day for your employees to suffer hearing their boss sing/ask if a boy can "get it up." Ugh, sorry about that. Maybe this zine triggered some karaoke nightmare flashbacks for me. —Tricia Ramos (PO Box 7831, Beverly Hills, CA 90212)

MAXIMUM ROCK'N'ROLL #411, \$4.99, 8 1/2" x 11", newsprint, 126 pgs.

MRR is punk's version of *The New Yorker*. No matter what you do, no matter how much richness you've still got to read from the last one, it's still going to show up in your mailbox and you're just going to have to move on. This issue features an interview with Elix-r, a "all girls" punk group out of Denton, Texas, who said something really interesting: namely, how some dudes have a subconscious draw toward tinkering with a woman's guitar and amp whereas they'd be less likely to do so to just walk up and fuck with a guy's gear. I've seen it, I believe it, and knowing where I come from, I bet a younger guy I'd be stupid enough to do it. The interview with Myanmar punks, No U Turn, has some good anecdotes, such as the time they had to censor one of their songs that featured the lyric, "Turn the radio off," as the government thought they meant, "Turn off the [government] radio," while the band meant, I think, "Turn the radio off [so you don't have to listen to shitty music]." San Francisco hardcore dudes Fatigue get a feature, too, in which they settle once and for all that "oi bands are garbage." If that's not enough, we get a four-page hangout with Alice Bag. Bada-boom. —Jim Joyce (Maximum Rock'n'roll, PO Box 460760, SF, CA, 94146, maximumrocknroll.com)

MAXIMUM ROCK'N'ROLL #412, \$4.99, 8 1/2" x 11", newsprint, 94 pgs.

Issue 412 is devoted to Pinoy Punk. What's Pinoy Punk? I'm just learning, too. In abbreviated form, it's punk culture from the Philippines and punk of the Filipino diaspora around the globe. And here's something I didn't know—the Philippines had a raging punk scene the '80s, and it seems as big as ever now with events like Aklasan Fest, a San Francisco event that "Unit[es] the Filipino Punk Diaspora Since 2014," and I suppose it's been big for a while, too. The zine *Bamboo Girl* has been around since '96, and distros like Brown Recluse having been stocking Pinoy zines for a bit as well. In short, a lot of this

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NEW SKEPTICS LP AVAILABLE DIG IT!

Though the first (solo) recordings were done in 2008, the Skeptics started playing live shows in June 2011. They are now celebrating their six years as a band with their self-titled record, and fourth album, out on Beast and Juvenile Delinquent Records. The nine tracks filling the gap between 'Fuzz Punk' and 'Heavy Garage' have come a long way from the Revival kind of sound of their first efforts. The overall sound here is more contemporary, with the bass heavier and the fuzz thicker. This LP, recorded by none other than the master, Lo'Spider, and housed in a sleeve designed by Hélène Jeudy will please both the Spits' fanatics and the early-Dead Meadow lovers.

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issue involves exposing *MRR* readers to groups they might've missed. There are literal lists of bands (Moxiebeat, Monte, First Quarter Storm, Material Support) and personal takes on what it means to be Pinoy—it “means way more than just being a Filipino kid that likes music—[it means not] pushing one’s Filipino identity in the dark... so you can feel more at ease in a sea of white spaces,” and it means “working in [a] community against capitalism in its most evil forms,” too. There are even short guides to zine and record shopping abroad. What’s more? One columnist, Geyl, reflecting on the Ghost Ship fire, gave a call for anarchist fire drills, which is ■ really cool idea for safe-proofing DIY venues. Onward. —Jim Joyce (Maximum Rock’n’roll, PO Box 460760, SF, CA, 94146, maximumrocknroll.com)

PASAZER #33, 25 zloty, 8½” x 11”, offset, 208 pgs.

For less than seven American bucks, this killer Polish zine can be yours. It’s packed with tiny print, columns, reviews, and bands. Tons of bands. The ongoing history of Black Flag, which I remember from past issues, includes photos I’ve never seen before, and the twenty-five song CD sampler features bands from Poland. Man, I miss CD samplers—such a great way for bands to get listens and transcend the language barrier. Some of the acts from this one will make their way into my next podcast installment. Recommended. —Michael T. Fournier (PO Box 42, 39-201 Debica 3, Poland)

■ prequel with some of the same characters. Sean is still drawing caricatures of tourists on the pier in San Francisco—instead of making his customers look cute, he makes them ugly, and for this they pay him. Now that’s ■ job. His buddy Jessie cruises by when Sean’s done for the day, and at first it’s ■ mellow hangout, but things take ■ weird turn when Sean asks ■ innocuous question that causes Jessie to harm himself. I won’t unwind the whole thing right here, I’ll just say that Sean (the author) paces his stories really well, and aside from the quality of story, it’s cool to see the raw presentation, too, handwritten in pencil and photocopied with ■ colored pencil cover. That said, it feels weird not to mention this, too. I was a bit startled to read a line wherein the narrator drops ■ doozy of a racial slur while casually describing his friend. I don’t know what that was all about. It seemed a little asynchronous, if that’s the word, to see that term in ■ story that was otherwise pretty compassionate. I hope Sean keeps writing, and as he does so I hope he can find ways to tell his stories without isolating a wider readership, which I suspect he’s capable of. —Jim Joyce (Sean Dunne, AN4246, PO Box 905, Avenal, CA 93204)

STARDUMB #8, 3 Euro, 5½” x 8½”, print, 35 pgs.

Remember that wave of “fanzines” which were cleverly designed catalogues for record labels? This one doesn’t even try to conceal it. Its slick look and overt shilling makes me feel like I need ■ shower. No thanks. —Michael T. Fournier (PO Box 21145, 3001 AC Rotterdam, The Netherlands)

Fences are put through unusual stress tests...

—Michael T. Fournier | TAMMY & ERROL #4-#6

POPNOIR #1, Free or trade, 4” x 5”, copied, 16 pgs.

Small mini-zine representing Austin, Texas’s Spiderhouse, and two bands that played during their spring festival season. The first small interview was with The Ortiz Brothers, and the second with Thelma & The Sleaze. Both bands were interviewed about their music and why they hate SXSW. Rest of the zine is filled with retro photo collages and reads more like an amalgamation of show flyers than anything else. —Tricia Ramos (PopNoir, 2908 Fruth #201, Austin, TX 78705)

PUNK. \$?, copied, 5½” x 8½”, 18 pgs.

This small and very DIY output from photographer Jorge Sanchez Arcos is one of those tiny pearls that emerges from the ■ of media that we are confronted with on ■ daily basis. These black and white photographs document punk shows from bands like Limp Wrist, Citizen Fish, and Brujeria, and manage to capture the raw power, the heat, and the ecstatic release of seeing ■ great band in ■ small setting play heartfelt songs that strike at your core. —Jon Mule (No address listed)

ROCK ‘N’ ROLL FOREVER!, \$15, 8½” x 11”, copied, 108 pgs.

This zine consists of more than ■ hundred pages of full-color photographs documenting the photographer’s experience of the last decade of DIY punk in the United States (mostly). The price may be steep enough to warrant some double-takes, but it makes sense if you consider this ■ punk rock yearbook, something to flip through in search of some unfocused memory, the approximation of ■ feeling. It’s a scrapbook of someone who’s been to a ton of punk places and met ■ ton of punk people. There are wild stagedives and posed band photo shoots as well as more understated shots: friends goofing off in fast food restaurants, waiting around in vans, exploring dilapidated buildings, just hanging out. Maybe half of the photos are captioned with the names of the bands or people pictured, while the rest are left context-free and mysterious. Scribbled drawings in Sharpie and ballpoint pen line the margins. Some shots ■ immediately striking, while others might have been unremarkable in another context—presented all together like this, they make something familiar and sweet. An honest and unaffected tribute to a certain kind of life from someone who was there and thought to make some kind of record. —Indiana Laub (Rock ‘n’ Roll Forever!, PO Box 1959, New York, NY 10013)

SO LONG AS IT’S NOT LIKE YESTERDAY, \$3, 5½” x 8½”, 33 pgs.

The last zine I read by Sean was called *The Late Birthday Present*. It featured ■ story (with some autobiographical parts?) about ■ dude—also named Sean—hanging out with his homeless friend, Jessie, and Jessie’s buddy, Mike. They go to the circus for Mike’s birthday, roast ■ doob, and end up in ■ graveyard. There were Crimpshrine allusions, too, and some consideration of what addiction does to people. I liked it. This zine, *So Long as It’s Not Like Yesterday*, is like

TAMMY & ERROL #4-#6, free? 8½” x 14”, copied, tri-fold

This is the second installment of Daryl’s ongoing series chronicling the awkward, misadventures of his two protagonists. Herein, mushrooms ■ gobbled, walls are stained, and fences are put through unusual stress tests, all with ■ deadpan delivery which makes the absurdity more hilarious. Don’t take my word for it, though. Seek this out with Razorcake orders, or, better yet, catch Daryl reading live. You’ll be forever changed. —Michael T. Fournier (No address listed)

TRUST #184, 3 Euro, 8½” x 11”, offset, 64 pgs.

Long-running German zine bringing the goods across the pond with this one. Ol’ reliable interview/review/columns format, with coverage of *Maximum Rock’n’roll*, No U Turn and more. All right! —Michael T. Fournier (Postfach 11 07 62, 28086 Bremen, Germany)

WHEN LANGUAGE RUNS DRY: A ZINE FOR PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC PAIN AND THEIR ALLIES #5, \$4, 5½” x 8½”, 52 pgs.

A sharp-looking compilation zine about how people live with chronic pain, which is defined as “pain that persists for more than six months [that] is often mysterious and goes undiagnosed [and] can stem from injury, illness, surgical complications, or can be an inherited condition.” I got a lot out of *When the Language Runs Dry*, probably because I’ve had acquaintances with chronic pain, but I’ve never really understood what they were going through, aside from the obvious. This zine is a teaching tool, but it feels like ■ publication I’d definitely be reading if I were experiencing chronic pain, too. It features work which validates the experience of those who are living with such hurt. One comic explored the way pain plays with time (time slows down with pain and pain steals time, too), and another comic follows ■ social worker through her day: patients get treatment, some die unexpectedly, and friends ask for help outside of work, too. The narrator tries to handle all of this psychic weight with grace. But it’s hard. To that end, being graceful, one essay taught me about the spoon theory. This theory basically suggests that we only have so much energy to give. Obligations tax our energy. Pushing our limits harms us. It called the Spoon Theory because of this visual. Picture a bunch of spoons on top of each other in a drawer, maybe five of them. Work costs three spoons. You’ve only got two left at the end of the day. You can use one to make dinner, maybe one more to stay up and read, whatever. But if you’re out late, you might nourish some part of your social life, but you’d also be stealing from that next day’s energy. This zine is good, and I hope you read it. —Jim Joyce (chronicpainzine@gmail.com, chronicpainzine.blogspot.com)



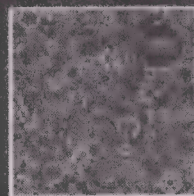
RED DONS



"GENTLE as a MARCH" vs "LETTERS" 7"

The New Red Dons return with their third vinyl release and their first new music since the 2018 LP, "The Head Hand of Tradition". Now in their 11th year as a band, the Red Dons have established a formula of dark, driving punk rock with rarely melodic hooks and the same on this 7" it lives on this tradition. The 7" will be released in a limited numbered 500 copies with 100 red vinyl copies available only through the band and/or Man in Decline Records.

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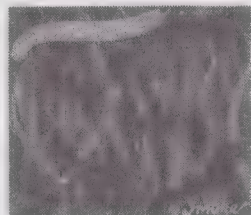
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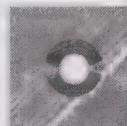
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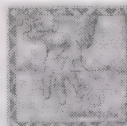
The Invisible
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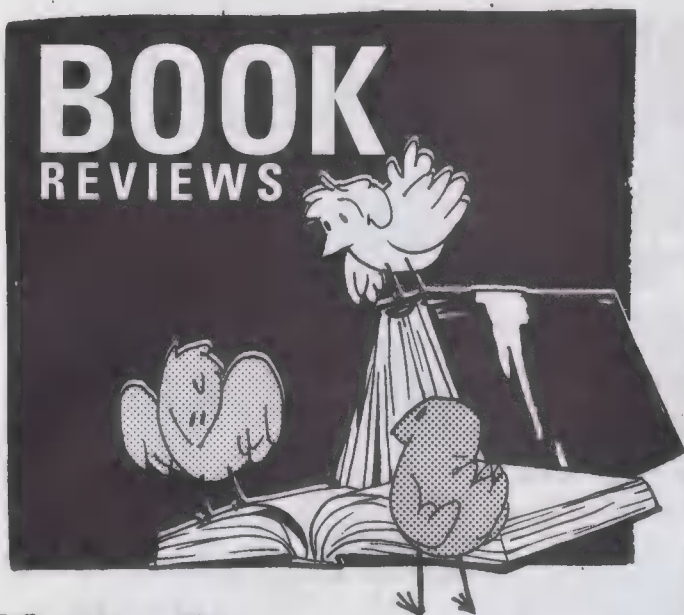
Slow Motion
Cowboys

HAINTS SKATE DITCHES



Tim Kerr, photo by Tony West

BOOK REVIEWS



Difference Between, The

By Billy McCall, 140 pgs.

This book may be my new favorite thing. It's such a simple idea, but works so well. Billy McCall takes various things (Ice Cube and Ice T, empathy and sympathy, herbs and spices) that sound similar or often confused, and explains the difference. I learned so much reading *The Difference Between*. There were many times I said, "Yeah! I always get those confused!" McCall's explanations are quick, easy-to-understand, and occasionally humorous (Palm Springs and Palm Beach, for example).

This is not a diss, but I can totally see this book being for sale at Urban Outfitters. It's smaller in size (approximately 4" x 5") and each person/

sets the reader in the scene even with its edgier moments. I came across scenes where I cringed at the brutal description (if I ever have to shave my asshole I'm going to be sooo careful) but the fact that it did so is a sign of Johnson's talent.

Nails is not an easy read. I felt sad through most of it—while I can't relate to experiences with gender issues, I could understand the sentiment of loneliness and how crushing it is. Johnson has her experiences but they're relatable and interesting (if sometimes embarrassing), which shows a great talent of a writer. The ability to pull at my heartstrings and make a unique tale universal is incredible. Despite its lack of happiness, the honesty makes *Nails* one of the best books I've read in a long time. I can't recommend it highly enough. —Kurt Morris (Lazy Fascist Press, lazyfascistpress.com)

Nowhere to Go

By S. Ludman, 244 pgs.

I can't review this book without taking into account the skinhead stereotype: hyper-masculine, violent men beholden to leaders; vague ideology; a perverted sense of honor; and the ability to justify anything based on all of the former, but prone to beating your ass. That said, I've known skinheads, partied with skinheads, been best friends with skinheads, and damn well know the value of having them on your side. Still, I can't think of one who didn't have at least two of the above faults. Skinheads, though, don't come out of a vacuum. There's a reason why they chose their subculture, why they glorify violence, why they hang on to backward ideas of what it is to be a man and, like everyone else, the clay that society molded them into. There's room for nuance and complexity in telling their stories.

Unfortunately, you won't get that in *Nowhere to Go*. It starts off decent enough. Matt lives with a foster mother who's a coke dealer and addict. After being beaten to a pulp by her latest dirtbag boyfriend, Matt steals all her cash and coke and runs away to Los Angeles to be a punk. We get a good idea of why Matt's angry, why he can kick ass and take a punch. We understand the chip on his shoulder. But that's all we get.

As soon as he gets to L.A. he gets jumped by a skinhead gang. He beats their asses. They recruit him into their gang. He meets the hot punk

I cringed at the brutal description (if I ever have to shave my asshole I'm going to be sooo careful) but the fact that it did so is a sign of Johnson's talent.

—Kurt Morris | *Nails*

place/thing is given a page with an illustration, so it makes for a quick read. *The Difference Between* is a great idea for some toilet reading or a white elephant gift the holidays approach. Highly recommended and for six bucks it's worth the price. —Kurt Morris (iknowbilly@gmail.com)

Nails

By MP Johnson, 77 pgs.

For the record, MP Johnson is a *Razorcake* contributor, although I've never met her. She normally writes in the world of bizarro fiction, a cult genre of the weird that made me wonder if I would like *Nails*. She assured her followers this short book was different from her normal writing—much more personal.

I've been interested in seeing Johnson change over the past year or two as she has more openly addressed her attempts to accept her gender. While I don't have personal knowledge with it, my observation has been that transitioning can be an incredibly hard experience. Johnson opens a window to it with these seventy-seven pages.

The story takes place over the course of a few days in Los Angeles. By herself, away from friends and family, it's a place she can feel safe (so to speak) to crossdress and explore who she is. Johnson goes to a Damned concert, gets her nails done, eventually meets a dominatrix, and has many misadventure along the way. There were so many times I felt empathetic to everything which befell her. Johnson's ability to draw the reader into her tale says a lot about her writing.

Speaking of that, for anyone who thinks authors in the world of bizarro fiction can't write, I'd suggest they read *Nails*. Johnson's prose

girl with her dyed hair and ceaselessly referenced nipples and fights the rival skinhead gang for her honor. She breaks his heart. He fights anybody and everybody to forget the pain. And on. And on.

If that's what you want, you'll get it here along with countless plodding pages telling of Matt's broken heart, but the author lacks the ability to show it. Immersive literature would show—through dialogue, symbolism, understated actions and body language—deep meaning, perhaps even allowing you to sympathize. Unfortunately, any potential for this is tossed away for comball, Hollywood-style dialogue, countless brawls, heterorutting, and boob adjectives. If there's something to be said for the work, the pleasure and drive in making it is palpable. The author seems excited to tell an action-filled story without the pretenses of literature, but it takes more than that to grab me. —Craven Rock (CCM Publishing Group, Crowd Control Media, 8504 Firestone Blvd. #391, Downey, CA 90241, crowdcontrolmedia.net)

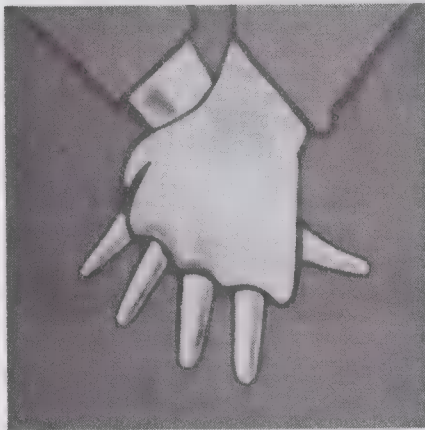
Punk Women, Volume One

By David Ensminger, 98 pgs.

Ensminger tells the reader right off the bat that this is a collection of profiles of women in punk written by a cis white male. He instantly outs himself as not unqualified, but as a champion of these overlooked stories who carries with him an awareness as to not come off as an expert on a life not lived by him. As soon as I finished reading the book, I went right back to that introduction to see if he accomplished what he set out to do.

Yes, this is a hodge-podge of genres (hardcore, punk, thrash, metal),

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as well as a varied group spanning many races, backgrounds, and LGBTQ women. There were a ton of bands I wasn't familiar with, but I feel like all I got was a generalized review of their music. Sometimes (The Voids for example) Ensminger wouldn't mention the woman whatsoever in his quick blurb about their music. It left me feeling like I'd read a few hundred words about the career of a band just because there's a woman in it.

I suppose there is a tactic in simply normalizing the gender diversity, though his mission statement was to shine a light on these women and I think in some excerpts he fell just short. His voice and writing style is very cerebral and academic, which I much enjoyed. However, there were only a handful out of the many, many profiles that included an actual interview and it left me feeling like these women's voices were still overlooked. What I really hoped for were personal stories from these musicians. I realize that's quite the undertaking, but I think Ensminger has the drive to do so.

“Frankie & Johnny” has to be the most sexual song of England’s 1950s, and accordingly, inspired hundreds of British teenagers to take up their first guitars. And now I get skiffle.

—Jim Woster | *Roots, Radicals and Rockers: How Skiffle Changed the World*

There was Mel Hell from the Zippernecks who suffered from nerve damage inflicted from her dentist in 2011 and I learned so much about her life—coping with constant, debilitating pain yet still carrying on with life the best she could. Or the story of Osa Atoe coming up with the D.C. punk scene and assuming all punk was political at its core, leading to her being an activist today.

There were a few times where I didn't know where or when bands were from, and others when I was completely immersed in the life of the woman profiled. I think this book is suffering a bit from being overzealous and not dedicating enough time to each subject. For volume two, maybe reach out for at least a comment or two when possible? Though I overall enjoyed this, I will knock the author one coveted punk point for getting a Blondie song wrong (“Rip Her to Shreds”—not “Tear”). Even if I'm being a little harsh, I am very happy a project like this exists and would recommend grabbing one of the four hundred copies out there. —Kayla Greet (Left Of The Dial Books)

Roots, Radicals and Rockers: How Skiffle Changed the World

By Billy Bragg, 431 pgs.

What's your first thought when you hear the word “skiffle”? A word that Microsoft Word doesn't recognize? Before reading Billy Bragg's history of the not firmly defined musical genre, my first thought was always Lonnie Donegan's novelty song “Does Your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavor on the Bedpost Overnight,” which I probably first heard on the Dr. Demento radio show. I knew the Beatles started as a skiffle band, but more or less thought skiffle was something young musicians did until they figured out how to make girls think of sex.

Roots, Radicals and Rockers directed my attention to Lonnie Donegan's version of “Frankie & Johnny,” to which I direct your attention—it has to be the most sexual song of England's 1950s, and accordingly, inspired hundreds of British teenagers to take up their first guitars. And now I get skiffle.

In Bragg's history, skiffle is a long, cylindrical magnet that stretches from the middle of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth, attracting moments in history from the dawn of the American railroad to the explosion of post-war British youth culture. It's a feast of learning.

Bragg's voice is conversational, but the conversation is business-casual, not as with, say, Sarah Vowell's voice—her readers are friends, Bragg's readers are co-workers.

And if you've never heard “Midnight Special” by Lead Belly—and apparently that's the proper spelling of his name, not “Leadbelly” or “LeadBelly”—listen to that, too. Most of rock music, including your favorite punk song, comes from it. I would not have realized that without Bragg's book. (I also didn't know what the Midnight Special was, and now I do.) —Jim Woster (Faber & Faber, faber.co.uk)

Stranded in the Jungle: Jerry Nolan's Wild Ride:

A Tale of Drugs, Fashion, the New York Dolls, and Punk Rock

By Curt Weiss, 280 pgs.

My second punk rock obsession after *Never Mind the Bollocks* was the New York Dolls' self-titled album. “Personality Crisis” is a near-perfect encapsulation of teenage hormones firing in ten different directions at once, in a way that was sloppy, aggressive, sexy, and a little dangerous. Fairly or not to the other band members though, my fandom never went much beyond an obsession with Johnny Thunders and a fascination with the fact that David Johansen was also “Hot Hot Hot” Buster Poindexter. Curt “Lewis King” Weiss definitely put his research work in, and the result is a comprehensive and enlightening read on Jerry Nolan, whose drumming with the New York Dolls and the Heartbreakers put him actively in the eye of the New York punk storm since the very beginning.

True to the biography's subtitle, Nolan was a consummate thrift shop

fashion plate whose ear for stylish '50s rockers like early Elvis and Eddie Cochran in his youth informed his belief in the power of slick personal presentation on stage (or “profilin”). Perhaps the biggest musical influence in Nolan's life, though, is jazz drummer and band leader Gene Krupa. Weiss brings just enough analysis of technique to the table to tease out subtleties and illuminate facets of Jerry's craft behind the drums without slipping into pedantics. Nolan's Pre-Dolls and Heartbreakers career is traced all the way from his early teenage garage bands in Lawton, Okla., to his first recorded bands in the late '60s, Peepl and Maximillian, who attempted to ride the wave of psychedelia that emerged in the wake of Jimi Hendrix. Along the way, Jerry had a drive for true fame that was constantly just slightly out of his reach, but exacerbated by people he came across in his life, like his childhood best friend Peter Criss and a dalliance with young Bette Middler.

Unfortunately, like many of these early punk stories, heroin might as well get second billing. By the time of the New York Dolls, Jerry was a daily heroin and methadone user. Nolan's and Thunders' bromance, while producing some amazing music, was also quite likely a slow death sentence for both of them, as the rest of their lives became about coping above all else. The book doesn't shy away from Jerry's dark side. He was unquestionably an asshole on many levels. While he engaged in the standard rock star tropes like womanizing and becoming a controlling egoist, there were also some tendencies of his that really went beyond, such as his stubbornly ingrained racist attitudes (despite being friends with many people of color), and the eagerness with which he and Johnny Thunders took in introducing people to heroin. For many early punks though, sketchy behavior is often par for the course, so hopefully most people are smarter than to look towards them as role models. —Adrian Salas (Backbeat Books, 33 Plymouth St. Suite 302, Montclair, NJ 07042, backbeatbooks.com)

To Funk and Die in LA

By Nelson George, 280 pgs.

Based on the title, I wasn't sure I could take *To Funk and Die in LA* seriously. I'm glad I dug in and tried my best to approach it with an open mind, though, because it paid off. This mystery, part of the D Hunter series by Nelson George, finds the protagonist primarily in the Los Angeles neighborhoods of Koreatown, Crenshaw, and Pico-Union. D's grandfather was, it seemed, a relatively innocuous grocery store owner. But after his grandfather's murder, D comes to find out he was heavily enmeshed in illegal activities and had a connection with a reclusive R&B legend, Dr. Funk.

It may seem odd to have a murder mystery reviewed in a music zine, but George's knowledge of the L.A. music scene—specifically that of the 1980s funk, hip hop, and R&B scenes—is massive. (This shouldn't be a

surprise, since, as a music journalist, he's been writing about R&B for over thirty-five years.) He seamlessly weaves fictional characters such as Dr. Funk in with Prince and A Tribe Called Quest. He also namedrops Black Flag and NWA along the way. In fact, this book is almost as much about music as it is about a murder. Even though I don't know much about the black music scene of L.A., it didn't matter. The characters talked about music not as encyclopedias but as true fans, a way in which they can elucidate their love without appearing annoying.

George writes short chapters, which urged me to not want to put the book down. His characters are realistic and relatable while also being unique. The protagonist, D Hunter, is a black man who is HIV positive. The book teems with blacks, Koreans, and Latinos, especially Salvadorans and Mexicans. There was nary a white person in *To Funk and Die in LA*, and, as a white person, I wouldn't have it any other way. The opportunity to experience a different culture with individuals unlike myself is what helps expand my mind.

In addition to being a mystery, these 280 pages are a look at the cultural landscape of Los Angeles and how it has changed over the years. Exposed are the relationships of blacks against Koreans and Latinos against blacks as demographics shifted over the decades. George writes about the changes in the city without being heavy-handed; it comes across in dialogue and realizations but still makes its point.

Reading this book reminded me how much I enjoy mysteries. So much so, in fact, that I'm going to check out the other books in this series from my library. I'd recommended *To Funk and Die in LA* for mystery fans, Los Angelenos, and connoisseurs of hip hop, R&B, rap, and the like—it's an engaging, enlightening read. —Kurt Morris (Akashic, 232 Third St. Suite A115, Brooklyn, NY 11215)

What Is Hip-Hop?

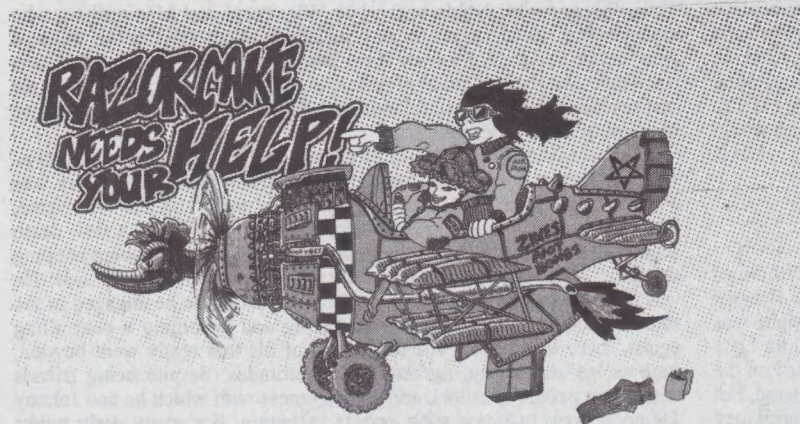
By Eric Morse and Anny Yi, 32 pgs.

What Is Hip-Hop? is a children's book that uses rhymes and 3D clay illustrations to trace hip-hop music and culture, artist by artist, from rap's early days in New York City to its current world-conquering status. The art's incredible. It looks like claymation stills, and the figurines of famous

I'd recommended *To Funk and Die in LA* for mystery fans, Los Angelenos, and connoisseurs of hip hop, R&B, and rap.

—Kurt Morris | *To Funk and Die in LA*

rappers appear in tableaux featuring iconic images from their eras and cities. Everything is recreated in clay—from the palm trees and old school convertible in the NWA spread, to the brick walls and boomboxes of 1980s NYC. It's a fun tribute, but the lack of a narrative makes it drag toward the end. When I gave *What Is Hip-Hop?* the ultimate test and read it to my toddler, his attention started to flag about two-thirds through. "Too much of a good thing" aside, this follow-up to Eric Morse and Anny Yi's *What Is Punk?* improves on the original's formula with nicely lit photography and a thoughtful layout. Get this book for your friends who are new parents. They'll be grateful when their kids pull it off the shelf. —Chris Terry (Akashic, akashicbooks.com)



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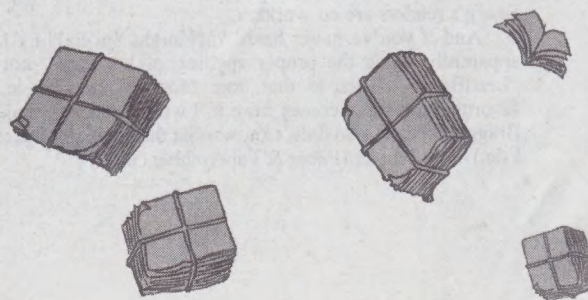
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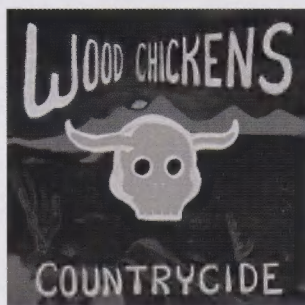
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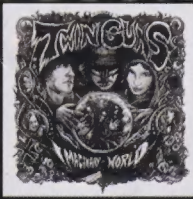


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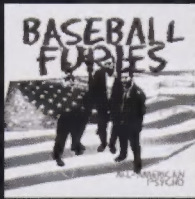
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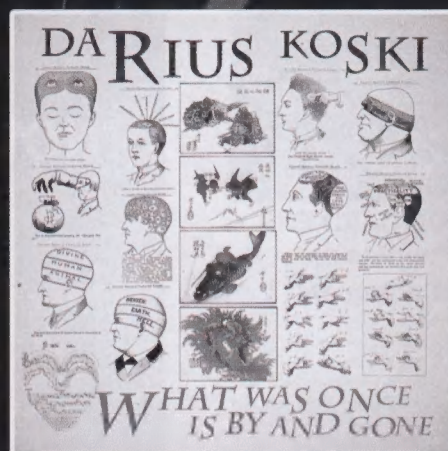
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